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CONFIDENTIAL.

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FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING THE

AFFAIRS

OF

ASIATIC TURKEY.

[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 8984.]

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January to June 1907.

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CONFIDENTIAL.

Further Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Asiatic Turkey.

[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 8984.]

[273] No. 1.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(*Received January* 3.)

India Office, January 2, 1907.

Sir,

IN reply to Sir E. Gorst's letter of the 19th December, 1906, forwarding a copy of Sir N. O'Conor's despatch No. 609 of the 1st September last relative to the delimitation of the Aden frontier, I am directed to say that Mr. Secretary Morley sees no objection to Sir N. O'Conor's proposal to take act, by means of a *note verbale*, in terms such as he suggests, of the declaration contained in the Turkish note of the 21st August, 1906, as to the authenticity of the original maps signed by the British and Turkish Commissioners.

Mr. Morley understands that, in Sir N. O'Conor's view, the declaration by the Porte above mentioned constitutes a sufficient record of the settlement arrived at, and that the course he proposes will obviate complications which might be expected to arise should a further Iradé be required.

I am, &c.

(Signed) A. GODLEY.

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[521] No. 2.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(*Received January* 6.)

(No. 5.)

(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January* 6, 1907.

PERMISSION obtained by Consul at Bussorah for Koweit goods referred to in my despatch No. 826 of the 27th December, 1906, to be returned to Kurrachee as I suggested.

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[588] No. 3.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(*Received January* 7, 1907.)

(No. 824.)

Sir, *Constantinople, December* 27, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to report that, according to the information which I have received, it appears that the Ottoman Government have withdrawn the greater part of their troops from Kassim. The account given by His Majesty's Consul at Bussorah is that out of nine battalions (about 1,800 men), all but two have been withdrawn by order of the Sultan, at the request of the inhabitants. Although Sami Pasha reported that

four battalions were required, the Sultan is said to have ordered that another battalion should be withdrawn in a year's time.

The account given by the Acting British Consul at Jeddah is different. According to him, the Commander of the Turkish troops in Kassim was informed by Bin Saood that they had no right to stay there, and that if they had orders to fight he was ready; the officer thereupon withdrew his men, transport being supplied on full payment by Bin Saood.

In any case, it would seem that the troops have for the most part been withdrawn, and that Bin Saood has obtained a success.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. BARCLAY.

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[589] No 4.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 7, 1907.)

(No. 825.)

Sir, *Constantinople, December 27, 1906.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 805 of the 14th instant, respecting Turkish encroachments in Wadi Sha'b, I have the honour to state that the *pro-memorid* therein inclosed was duly presented to the Sublime Porte, and that on the 6th (19th) December the Minister of the Interior telegraphed to the Vali of Yemen, informing him of the complaint made by His Majesty's Government, and instructing him to see that the Customs authorities abstain from any action at variance with the decisions of the Aden Boundary Commission.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. BARCLAY.

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[24] No. 5.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 7, 1907.)

(No. 826.)

Sir, *Constantinople, December 27, 1906.*

ON the 18th September last I received a telegram from His Majesty's Consul at Bussorah stating that two bales of piece goods, destined for Koweit and overcarried to Bussorah in a British Indian steamer, had been detained at the custom-house on the ground that Koweit was a Turkish port and had no custom-house, and that, therefore, goods must pay import duties at Bussorah. The Director of Customs at Bagdad was said to be acting in this matter on the orders of the Central Customs.

As it did not seem desirable to raise the question of the status of Koweit for the sake of so apparently small a matter, I instructed Mr. Crow to endeavour to induce the agent to obtain permission to reship the bales to Bombay.

I heard no more of the matter and consequently assumed that it had been settled, but having observed from your despatch No. 539 of the 15th instant that the bales of goods were destined for the Sheikh himself, and that he evidently felt strongly on the subject, I telegraphed to Mr. Crow to inquire what had happened. Mr. Crow replied on the 26th instant to the effect that the agent had failed to induce the local Turkish authorities to allow the reshipment of the goods, and that the matter had been referred to the Director of Customs at Bagdad.

Had I known that the goods were consigned to Sheikh Mubarek himself, I should have asked for your instructions in the first instance. As the matter stands, if the Turkish authorities persist in their demand for payment of duty and refuse to allow reshipment, I should be glad to learn whether you would wish me to make representations to the Sublime Porte on the subject, insisting on the fact that Koweit is not a Turkish port, or whether I should simply ask that permission may be given for the goods to be reshipped. In the latter case it would no doubt be obvious to the Turkish Government that we were endeavouring to evade the main question of the status of Koweit, and such evasion would very possibly strengthen them in their attitude.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. BARCLAY.

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[779] No. 6.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 7.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, with reference to India Office letter of the 31st December, 1906, for the information of the Secretary of State, paraphrases of telegrams relative to Turkish complaints as to the hoisting of a British flag on an island near Katif.

India Office, January 7, 1907.

Inclosure 1 in No. 6.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P. *January 5, 1907.*

KATIF. Your telegram dated the 24th December, 1906.

We have received a telegram, dated the 27th December, 1906, from Major Cox, reporting that His Majesty's ship "Sphinx," under directions from Admiral, recently carried out examination of headland approaches to Katif. Receipt of following from His Majesty's Consul at Bussorah is also reported by Resident, Persian Gulf:—

"Letter received from Vali, Bussorah, stating that information has reached him that on the 29th November, 1906, surveys were made at Ras Tanura by British steamer, and that flagstaff was erected and British flag hoisted two days later at Najwa Island, which is 1½ hours from Katif Harbour, opposite Dowarin. Vali says he is being pressed for a reply from Constantinople, and that, as some misunderstanding may arise, he would be glad to be furnished with explanations."

Commander of "Sphinx" replied as follows, in answer to inquiry by Major Cox:—

"It is not the case that the British flag was hoisted on the island. Following reply is suggested to the Vali of Bussorah's inquiry:—

"'No survey made, only necessary soundings to insure safety of ship. Najwa is small sand-bank 7 miles from nearest point of Turkish coast (!) guard. As aid to navigation, small pole with piece of old bunting of no significance was placed there.'"

I propose to approve course which Cox suggests, viz., that terms of answer to Vali should be those proposed by Commander of "Sphinx," with preface pointing out necessity, in connection with piracies committed, of our ships on Gulf duty having an accurate knowledge of the intricate waters in the vicinity of Bahrein. I will await your instructions before taking action, as it is desirable that reply should be made in identical terms to Vali and to Turkish Ambassador.

Inclosure 2 in No. 6.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P. *India Office, January 6, 1907.*

KATIF. Your telegram of yesterday.

It would, I think be much better to reply in words of Commander of "Sphinx," omitting preface proposed by Resident in Persian Gulf.

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[273] No. 7.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. G. Barclay.

(No. 11.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, January* 8, 1907.

I HAVE to inform you that I forwarded to the Secretary of State for India a copy of Sir N. O'Conor's despatch No. 609 of the 1st September relative to the discrepancies alleged to exist between the original maps signed on the spot by the Commissioners for the Aden frontier delimitation and the copies of those maps prepared in the Indian Survey Department, and I inquired at the same time whether Mr. Morley saw any objection to the course proposed by his Excellency for the practical solution of the question raised by the action of the Ottoman Government in this matter.

I now transmit to you herewith copy of the reply which has been returned to that communication,* expressing Mr. Morley's concurrence with Sir N. O'Conor's proposal, and I authorize you to address to the Sublime Porte a responsive *note verbale* to the effect suggested by his Excellency.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWARD GREY.

[1108] No. 8.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 11.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, paraphrases of inclosed telegrams relative to the policy in regard to the Aden Hinterland.

India Office, January 10, 1907.

Inclosure 1 in No. 8.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P. *December* 15, 1906.

ADEN Hinterland.

We submit following replies to questions in your telegram of the 14th instant regarding withdrawal of troops from Dthali:—

"1. On 1st December last we issued orders for withdrawal of all troops from Dthali. Modified orders were issued to effect that suitable escort for Political Officer, consisting of native infantry, should be left at Dthali on 8th December.

"2. Excepting suitable escort for Political Officer, all troops are being withdrawn. Total garrison of Dthali is 2 guns and 1,050 bayonets.

"3. Final decision not yet arrived at regarding size of escort to be left with Political Officer; 300 native troops are recommended by Resident. Meanwhile, the matter being under consideration, authority to retain suitable escort not exceeding strength proposed by him has been given to Resident.

"4. Movement of all the troops is not being carried out simultaneously. Withdrawal of Borderers, Scottish Rifles, and Sappers, 264 in all, has already taken place.

"5. Remainder move in four detachments, of which the last will reach Aden in the course of three weeks."

(Repeated to Resident, Aden.)

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* No. 1.

Inclosure 2 in No. 8.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P. *January* 1, 1907.

AFFAIRS in Aden Hinterland.

My telegram dated the 15th ultimo.

We shall be glad to be informed whether you concur in following general instructions which, subject to your approval, we propose to issue to Political Officer at Dthali:—

"His duty will be to watch affairs as they settle down after delimitation, and to keep in touch with Upper Yaffai and other tribes in neighbourhood; as regards international and territorial responsibilities entailed on us towards Turkish authorities by demarcation, to afford support and guidance to Amir; also to advise as to means by which future relations with Amir and his subjects and with other sections of the tribes should be conducted.

"Any step likely to lead to political or military entanglements must be avoided, and policy of non-interference with internal and domestic policy of tribes must be adhered to by him; and, in order to minimize effect of his withdrawal when it takes place, he is to conduct affairs on the undertaking that his retention is temporary. He may when necessary discuss with local Turkish authorities affairs of secondary importance; but in dealing with complaints he may receive he must be circumspect, and must take care not to exaggerate such as may occur.

"Any case which appears to call for active intervention must be referred by him specially for orders, but he may assist Resident, so far as this can be done without involving entanglements in purely tribal affairs, in peaceful settlement of intertribal disputes."

Inclosure 3 in No. 8.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P. *India Office, January* 8, 1907.

ADEN. Your telegram dated the 8th January.

While adhering to Treaty obligations, I desire to discourage any active interference in affairs of Upper Yaffai; otherwise, I have no objection to general scope of instructions to Political Officer, Dthali.

Whole question being dependent on Political Officer and Resident appreciating and acting in accordance with intention of His Majesty's Government to withdraw from Dthali, I would substitute following words for first sentence of instructions down to words "should be conducted," and for the passage beginning, "and in order to minimize," and ending, "retention is temporary":—

"His Majesty's Government intend that, as soon as local conditions permit, Political Officer should be withdrawn from Dthali, and that thereafter, when required, occasional visits should be paid to Dthali to deal with frontier affairs. It should therefore be understood by Political Officer that his duty is so to conduct affairs that his early withdrawal may be facilitated, and that when it takes place its effect may be minimized. This consideration should govern his dealings with the Amir and his subjects, with other sections of the tribes, and with the Turkish authorities. As soon as practicable, a report should be furnished by him as to date by which it will be possible to withdraw, and as to manner in which, after withdrawal, frontier affairs may be conducted."

Proposed instructions are approved, subject to these modifications.

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[779] No. 9.

Sir Edward Grey to Musurus Pasha.

Your Excellency, *Foreign Office, January* 15, 1907.

WITH reference to the *aide-mémoire* which you were good enough to leave at this Department on the 22nd ultimo, containing an enquiry whether there was any truth in a rumour which had reached the Turkish Government to the effect that the British flag had recently been hoisted on an island one and a-half hour distant from El Katif, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that a report was called for by telegraph on the subject from the Commander of His Majesty's ship "Sphinx."

I am now in a position to inform your Excellency that the rumour alluded to in the *aide-mémoire* is not in accordance with the facts. It appears that a small pole with a piece of old bunting of no significance attached thereto was placed on the Island of Nejwa as an aid to navigation, and it is no doubt this circumstance which has given rise to the report which formed the subject of your Excellency's enquiry.

I have, &c.

(Signed) E. GREY.

[2054] No. 10.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 18.)

Sir, *India Office, January* 17, 1907.

IN continuation of Sir A. Godley's letter of the 4th July last relating to the piracy alleged to have been committed by the Sheikh and villagers of Abu Dhaluf on the coast of El Katr in the Persian Gulf, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to forward, to be laid before the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, copy of a letter from the Government of India transmitting further papers on the subject.

Mr. Morley is disposed, subject to any observations which Sir E. Grey may desire to offer, to approve the terms of the instructions which the Government of India propose to issue to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf. It is assumed that the instructions given in paragraph 8 of the inclosure, Schedule (A),* refer only to action on the land, and not to action in the territorial waters of the Katr coast.

I am, &c.

(Signed) HORACE WALPOLE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 10.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Secret.)

Sir, *Fort William, December* 20, 1906.

WE have the honour to forward, for your information, a copy of the correspondence regarding the action taken by the Political Agent at Bahrein with reference to a piracy alleged to have been committed on a Persian boat by the Sheikh and villagers of Abu Dhaluf on the coast of Katr.

2. The instructions which we propose to issue to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf are contained in the draft which forms Schedule (A) to this despatch,* We should be glad to know whether they meet with the approval of His Majesty's Government.

We have, &c.

(Signed) MINTO.
KITCHENER.
DENZIL IBBETSON.
H. ERLE RICHARDS.
J. P. HEWETT.
E. N. BAKER.
H. ADAMSON.

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* Inclosure 2.

Inclosure 2 in No. 10.

Government of India to Major Cox.

(Confidential.)

Sir, *Fort William, December* , 1906.

I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated the 16th September, 1906, on the subject of a piratical act alleged to have been committed on a Persian boat by the Sheikh and villagers of Abu Dhaluf, a village on the northern Katr coast.

2. You draw attention to the fact that the orders passed by the Government of India in paragraph 4 of their letter dated the 3rd May, 1906, might be interpreted as implying that active interference by British officers is uncalled for in such cases of piracy unless British or British-protected interests are involved, and, before this interpretation of the orders crystallizes as a principle of policy to be followed in the Gulf, you request that the position may be reconsidered with reference to the facts brought to notice in your letter You state that such a doctrine has never before been specifically promulgated by the Government of India, and that in fact it was not followed in 1897 in a case in which Persian pirates who had robbed the crew of another Persian boat were captured near the mouth of the Shatt-el-Arab by the Royal Indian mail-steamer "Lawrence." You urge that its adoption at the present moment would not only be impolitic, but would greatly undermine that basis of humanitarian principle on which our action in the Persian Gulf has been mainly founded.

3. In paragraph 5 of the inclosure to your letter is quoted, in support of your argument, a letter, dated the 17th September, 1879, from the India Office to the Foreign Office, and you indicate the following as being, in your opinion, natural corollaries of the policy outlined in that letter:—

(1.) That as the Chiefs of Trucial Oman are bound by their Agreements with the British Government to abstain from all piracies, and as they have also undertaken to have no direct relations with foreign Powers, we should still be bound, in the event of an Omani boat committing a piracy on a Persian boat in which no British subject or property was concerned, to interfere in the interests of the Persian Government or let the latter take action on their own account.

(2.) By the same analogy, in the case of a piracy by a Katr boat, we should have to take the requisite steps or face the alternative of allowing the Persian Government to interfere on the Katr coast, a measure which would weaken our prestige among the Arabs of the Gulf.

4. In reply, I am to say, in the first place, that the letter from the India Office to the Foreign Office quoted by you merely contains an expression of Lord Cranbrook's opinion as to the maritime policy which it would be advisable for us to pursue in the Gulf, and cannot be regarded as affording an authoritative ruling on the subject. Indeed, it was expressly stated in a later Secret despatch from His Majesty's Secretary of State for India, dated the 9th January, 1880, that His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had not deemed it expedient to adopt at present the decided policy suggested in that letter. In the second place, I am to say that the procedure followed in 1897 in the case of the capture of Persian pirates by Royal Indian mail-steamer "Lawrence" does not provide a precedent for the treatment of all cases of piracy in the Persian Gulf in which British interests are not directly concerned. In the third place, the Government of India do not consider that the orders passed by them in the particular case in question can be regarded as bearing the interpretation placed upon them by you.

5. In order, however, that there may be no doubt in future as to the policy to be followed in such cases, I am directed to explain at length the situation in the light in which it appears to the Government of India. As stated in paragraph 5 of your letter, many of the Chiefs on the coast are either by Treaty or usage bound to the British Government to abstain from maritime war, and it is our right and our duty to demand redress from these Chiefs in the event of acts of piracy being committed by any of their subjects. In the opinion of the Government of India, it is further our duty to obtain redress for the subjects of these Chiefs when they suffer injuries by sea at the hands of other Arab tribes who are not connected with us by Treaty or usage, as the Chiefs in question are not in a position to obtain satisfaction by action on their own account. In order to free the sea from pirates, and so to fulfil their obligations, the

British Government may find it necessary to take action against such other Arab tribes, not only in cases in which British interests or the interests of subjects of Chiefs connected with the British Government are concerned, but also in cases in which the sufferers are subjects of foreign Powers, inasmuch as the British Government have been led to acknowledge a general obligation for the preservation of the maritime peace of the Gulf, an honourable duty which they have no desire to disclaim.

6. It is consistent with the policy of the Government of India and in consonance with their obligations that action should be taken to secure redress in such cases of piracy as the one under discussion, even though British interests are not affected; but, on the other hand, the nature of the action to be taken in such cases requires careful consideration with reference to other interests involved. The British Government, no doubt, have a right to take action by sea in all cases for the suppression of piracy in territorial waters off the Katr coast, as they claim the right to take such measures as British Naval Commanders may think fit, for the protection of British commerce and shipping, even in Turkish territorial waters. The question of action by land is, however, on a somewhat different footing. The Turkish Government claim supremacy over the Katr Peninsula, and resent any action by British officers which may appear to disregard this claim. Although the British Government do not recognize Turkish sovereignty on the Arabian coast below Ojair, yet at the same time occasions frequently occur when it is desirable to avoid offending Turkish susceptibilities if British interests can be adequately defended without doing so; and it is desirable, therefore, that when action is taken against tribes on the Katr Peninsula the British Government should be in a position if necessary to support it on the ground that British interests were involved. Further, it is advisable that the Government of India should not, without due deliberation, be involved in hostilities against any of the Katr tribes, as unexpected complications might result.

7. It has also to be remembered, with reference to the question of reprisals on land, that, apart from cases when a man-of-war is in a position to capture a pirate boat red-handed, instances in which immediate action is required are likely to be rare. The people of Katr cannot permanently abandon their coast villages, they cannot part with the pearl-boats on which their livelihood depends, nor can they cut themselves off from their commercial communication with Bahrein. The means of bringing pressure to bear upon them are, therefore, always ready to hand, and the necessary pressure can be applied with the same effect after the lapse of some time as immediately on the commission of a piracy.

8. Having regard to these considerations, the Government of India are averse to granting general discretion to local officers with regard to the action to be taken on the Katr coast for the prevention or punishment of disturbances of the maritime peace, nor are they prepared to lay down any general rule as to the cases in which redress may or may not be exacted. They would prefer that each case should be reported by telegraph or by post as it may occur; and they do not consider that the occurrence of a slight delay in disposing of the matter will involve any disadvantageous consequences as regards the ultimate settlement of such cases. Probably, as a rule, before practical action is resorted to, it would be well to try the expedient of endeavouring to obtain redress by communicating with the leading Sheikh of Katr. This has been the procedure adopted in several previous cases, and in the present instance it is noted that Captain Prideaux had communications with Sheikh 'Esa-bin-Hamad-al-Manna'i on the subject of the alleged theft of property.

9. The Government of India concur with you that, for the reasons given in paragraph 7 of your letter, it is unnecessary to endeavour to enforce the rule suggested by Captain Prideaux, that petty Headmen of quasi-independent villages on the Katr coast should be required to call on the Political Agent if they see his flag, and they are of opinion, with reference to Captain Prideaux' recommendations for the final disposal of the particular case in question, that, as the failure of the Headman to come on board the "Sphinx" was atoned for by his subsequent visit to Captain Prideaux in Bahrein, it is unnecessary to summon him again to Bahrein to hear the reasons for the closing of the case. The orders which the Political Agent proposes to pass in the matter, and which appear to the Government of India to be generally suitable, may be communicated to the Sheikh in writing.

I have, &c.

Inclosure 3 in No. 10.

Major Cox to Government of India.

Bushire, March 3, 1906.

(Confidential.)

I HAVE the honour to submit a copy of a communication, with inclosures, received from the Political Agent, Bahrein, in which he reports the circumstances of a visit made by him in His Majesty's ship "Sphinx" to Abu Dhaluf, on the north-western extremity of the Katr Peninsula, for the purpose of exacting reparation for the maltreatment by the Sheikh and inhabitants of a Persian dhow which was driven into their anchorage by stress of weather.

2. When I received the report the Senior Naval Officer had left for Muscat, and I was, moreover, expecting to visit Bahrein in the course of the ensuing week; I therefore delayed making any reference to Government until I had seen Captain Prideaux.

3. On arrival at Bahrein, on the 13th February, I learnt that the Sheikh of Abu Dhaluf had since sent in a representative to interview the Political Agent and explain his own version of the occurrence. He at the same time forwarded a letter from Sheikh Jasim-bin-Thani (to the Political Agent), who simply wrote that the matter did not directly concern him, but that he thought it right and friendly to tell Captain Prideaux that it seemed to him that the Abu Dhaluf people had done no wrong.

The representative came to Captain Prideaux under the auspices of the Bahrein Mullah, Jasim-bin-Mahza, and was sent back to say that it was necessary that the Sheikh of Abu Dhaluf should come in person to interview the Political Agent and enable him to investigate the matter, and that his immunity from harm while coming and going was guaranteed.

It was expected that he would arrive in about ten days, but as I have not since heard from the Political Agent, who has now gone out into camp for some days, I think it best to submit his original Report for the information of Government, in case they should hear of the incident from other quarters.

4. I shall telegraph if further reports show that the Manan'aa Sheikh has made any suitable settlement. If he does not, I should be glad to learn the views of the Government of India as to the expediency of my dealing with the matter in the manner suggested in the last two paragraphs of Captain Prideaux' Report.

Inclosure 4 in No. 10.

Captain Prideaux to Major Cox.

Bahrein, February 3, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to report that on the 28th ultimo the Commander of His Majesty's ship "Sphinx" kindly conveyed me to Abu Dhaluf, at the north-west end of the Katr Peninsula, for the purpose of inquiring into a complaint of ill-usage that had recently been made to me by the crew of a Persian boat. The particulars of the complaint are recorded in the statement attached.

2. We found the village situated in a most inaccessible place, with a reef of some 2½ miles in width in front of it, which at the time of our arrival, the tide being very low, was almost bare. As the boat channels were unknown to us, Captain Bowman decided not to send any boat ashore that night, though at about sunset a shore-boat might easily have come out to us had it so wished.

3. On the morning after our arrival my interpreter was sent ashore to inform the Headmen of the village that I wished to see him and to assure him that he would not be detained on board against his will. Captain Bowman agreed with me that it was not desirable that we should pay the first visit ashore, as we had come to make a judicial inquiry regarding the alleged misconduct of the villagers, and it was not convenient that we should do this while being treated as their guests. At the same time, as all the Trucial Chiefs make a point of calling upon the Resident on board his ship when he visits their territories, I thought that it was due to my position to insist and that the opportunity was a suitable one for insisting that the petty Chief of a small tribe should call upon me before I land, when it is perfectly apparent that I have come to see him.

4. My interpreter had been ordered not to stay long ashore on account of the falling tide, and when he returned he reported that the Sheikh had declared that he was much too frightened to come on board, and that he was a subject of Sheikh Esa, of Bahrein,

whom I should address on any business that concerned Abu Dhaluf. My interpreter had gone so far as to offer to stay ashore while the Sheikh was on board, but the latter remained exceedingly obdurate all the time. He of course protested that he had not acted high-handedly, saying that he knew well the orders of the Resident on the subject of assisting distressed mariners, and declared that if he had not befriended the Persians the Bedouin would have robbed them of their boat as well as all their cargo, a portion of which he said they were allowed to sell to the neighbouring village of Ruwais.

5. Twenty-four hours later, Captain Bowman sent his First Lieutenant, Mr. Wilding, ashore with a letter from me, copy of which is herewith attached. The Sheikh still refused to come off, whereupon Mr. Wilding told him that as an alternative he should come to Bahrein within ten days, and he said that if he found it feasible he would take possession of some of the boats that were lying at anchor in front of the village as security for his doing so. If the Sheikh failed to come, the "Sphinx" would return and would take such other measures as might appear necessary, perhaps even to the extent of destroying the pearling-boats that were drawn up on the beach. The Sheikh promised that he would come. Mr. Wilding then inspected the two best boats afloat, but came to the conclusion that, as the weather was rapidly becoming worse, he could not bring them out to the ship. He therefore returned to the "Sphinx" without taking other action, and we left for Bahrein as quickly as possible afterwards.

6. It was a considerable surprise to me to find that the people of this part of Katr should still ostensibly call themselves Bahrein subjects, but, as the Chief of Bahrein is quite incapable of imposing his will upon them for any practical purpose, I submit that this fact should not debar us from dealing with the tribes of the Katr mainland, and especially those who do not acknowledge the sovereignty of the Bin Thani family direct, in virtue of our claim to maintain the maritime peace. I am, of course, debarred at present from considering the question of the justice of the Persians' complaint against Abu Dhulaf, but I hope that you will agree with me that the Abu Dhulaf Headman's conduct in refusing to come off to the "Sphinx" calls for serious notice—not a single boat came near us during the three days that we were at anchor there—and that he should be fined a few hundred rupees as a mark of your displeasure at this attitude. If this is done, I think that in regard to the original complaint the ends of justice will be sufficiently met if he is made to refund the value of any cargo which he may be proved to have stolen in excess of his just claims for salvage.

7. If the Sheikh refuses to submit to your decision on these two points, it will be an easy matter for the "Sphinx" to mete out a severer punishment to him by destroying his boats, of which he has about a dozen pearlers drawn up on shore, some four cruising-boats on the water, and a number of smaller fishing-boats of little value. I do not think it is advisable to ask the Chief of Bahrein to enforce the punishment or for us to recognize his right to intervene if the Manan'aa Headman involves it, as, while the Chief is quite powerless to exercise authority which may be distasteful to the tribe, it is certain that he will find it equally distasteful to be called upon to do anything of a punitive nature to the people who, possibly contrary to expectation, have now claimed his protection.

Inclosure 5 in No. 10.

Statement of Khalifa-bin-Muhammad, of Bandar Rig.

(Translation.) 14*th Zil Qada*, 1323 (*January* 10, 1906).

I LEFT Bandar Rig on the 15th Shawal with 2 karas (200 Bushire mans) of wheat in a boat, whose nakhoda was Abdal Rasool. We left for Bahrein. On the 20th Shawal we encountered a storm near Ras-bu-Sufaha, and were driven away by the wind towards Katr. We came in sight of Abu Dhaluf, a village among the villages of Katr, on the night of the 22nd Shawal. Here the boat stranded on a reef, and out of fear we jettisoned half of the cargo. The boat, becoming lighter, floated, and we entered the khor and neared the anchoring place and anchored there. After we had anchored, there came to us a boat, and in it were twenty men. These boarded our boat and took hold of 2 namdas of cloth worth 13 rupees, ten hens worth 5 rupees, and one hairy matting worth 13 rupees.

They filled their boat and took these things away. The next day they again appeared and took away our boat close to the beach and stood it up on props. On the 24th Shawal, when it was ebb tide, they entered our boat, many townspeople, men, women, and children, and carried away the remaining wheat. Their Sheikh is named Esa, and he has a brother (or may be cousin) by name Abdallah. These divided the loot. When we raised our voice in protest, they bade us remain silent on pain of death. Out of fear we could not protest. They told us that if we wished to keep the wheat we might do so by giving up the boat, otherwise we must give them a writing saying that the wheat was theirs and the boat ours. We did not consent to write. Thereupon they declared that if we did not, they would not allow us to go, and they kept us confined for ten days. At last they forcibly took a writing from us to the effect that the wheat belonged to them and the boat to us, and that we had no claim on the wheat and no right, after which they let us go. We sailed and reached Bahrein on the 12th Zil Qada (8th January, 1906).

Inclosure 6 in No. 10.

Captain Prideaux to Sheikh Esa-bin-Hamad Manna'ai.

January 30, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that I arrived off your village at Asr time on the day before yesterday in His Majesty's ship "Sphinx." I hoped that you would have come off the same night to call upon me and inquire my business. As no boat, however, arrived, I sent my interpreter to you yesterday morning to inform you that I had come to communicate to you a complaint received from the crew of a Persian boat against you and the people of your village, and to hear what reply you had to make to the same.

My interpreter assured you that you would not suffer any restraint or harm by coming on board the ship. In spite of this you refused to comply with my summons. I now give you this notice that if you do not come on board the "Sphinx" to see me immediately with any papers or witnesses to disprove the accusation of the Persians who were stranded on your coast, I shall request the Commander of His Majesty's ship "Sphinx" to seize some of your boats until such time as you appear before me. If the boats receive any injury on their passage to Bahrein, the responsibility will be with you.

Inclosure 7 in No. 10.

Major Cox to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) *Bushire, March* 16, 1906.

WITH reference to paragraph 4 of my letter, dated the 3rd March last, the Sheikh has since come in to Bahrein to interview Prideaux, and friendly investigation is now in progress.

Inclosure 8 in No. 10.

Government of India to Major Cox.

(Telegraphic.) *Calcutta, March* 23, 1906.

YOUR telegram of the 16th: Abu Dhaluf.

Further report awaited, which will no doubt explain reasons for Prideaux' action.

Inclosure 9 in No. 10.

Major Cox to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) *Bushire, March* 28, 1906.

YOUR telegram of to-day regarding Abu Dhaluf. Please see letter from Political Resident in the Persian Gulf to Foreign Department,* dated the 9th October, 1899, reporting four cases, one of them at Abu Dhaluf, and secondly please see Foreign Department letter,† dated the 6th February, 1902. The present case was obviously one

* *Pro* Secret despatch, February 1900. † *Pro* Secret despatch, March 1902.

in which prompt action was important, and course taken by Prideaux seems to be in accordance with the spirit of last paragraph of last-named letter. If the above is the explanation desired, please consider it official; if not, I shall be glad of further opportunity. Second report of Political Agent was posted to you on the 19th instant.

Inclosure 10 in No. 10.

Major Cox to Government of India.

Bushire, March 17, 1906.

IN continuation of my letter of the 3rd instant and telegram of the 16th, I have the honour to forward a copy of a further report from the Political Agent, Bahrein, regarding the alleged case of piracy at Abu Dhaluf on the Katr coast.

Inclosure 11 in No. 10.

Captain Prideaux to Major Cox.

Bahrein, March 9, 1906.

IN continuation of my letter, dated the 3rd February, 1906, I have the honour report that on the 1st March, 1906, Sheikh Esa-bin-Hamad, Headman of Abu Dhaluf in Katr, appeared before me in Manama and made a statement, copy of which I attach, on the subject of the events connected with the stranding of a Persian boat near his village last January.

2. I reported to you verbally, at the time of your recent visit to Bahrein, that this Headman has sent me, through his relative, Husain-bin-Ali-ul-Manna'ai, who resides in Bahrein, on the last of the ten days which were allowed to him for appearance, a request to be excused from coming personally before me on the ground of ill-health, and that I had also received a letter (copy inclosed) from Sheikh Jasim-bin-Thani, whose good offices, as well as those of Sheikh Jasim-bin-Mahz'a, Kazi of Bahrein, had been enlisted in the Headman's favour.

3. The attendance of the accused was at last effected through the medium of the Kazi Sheikh Jasim, though the appearance of distrust as regards the genuineness of my promised safe-conduct was maintained up to the moment when the party reached the Agency gate. On the previous day the Kazi had called on me to announce the arrival of Sheikh Esa-bin-Hamad in Hed, and to ask me for a safe-conduct in writing. This I refused to give, saying that he had himself heard both from you and from myself that the Sheikh would not be put to any inconvenience while in Bahrein, and that he ought to know our ways better than to make such a request. In spite of this, on the following morning, the Kazi came into the Agency first, to obtain a renewal of my assurances, while the Headman sat outside for some minutes, surrounded by his relatives and friends.

4. With regard to the correctness or otherwise of the charge made against Sheikh Esa-bin-Hamad, I would prefer to give no opinion until after I have heard what reply the Persians may wish to make to his statement. I have written to Bandar Rig desiring them to return to Bahrein as soon as they can.

Inclosure 12 in No. 10.

Statement of Sheikh Esa-bin-Hamad-al-Manna'ai, of Abu Dhaluf, Katr.

WE first saw the boat of the Persians of Bandar Rig in the morning stranded on the reef about 2 miles off our village. My brother Abdallah and six other men went out to her, and found that the Persians had thrown some of their cargo overboard. They were also nearly dying of cold.

The "Mashuwa" had also lost her anchor. The Persians asked my brother to help them off the reef, and my brother said he would do so if they would give him half the wheat which remained in the boat together with half the boat. The Persians objected, and at last it was arranged that the Abu Dhaluf people should have a quarter of the property, namely, of the boat and wheat together. My people then got the boat floated, and brought her into the proper anchorage. We brought the Persians ashore, entertained them for seven days, and then, seeing that they were destitute, told them that they need only give us as much as they pleased. They gave us 2 rafas (1,120 lb.), and I ordered all the poor people of the village to go down and take their shares. We left at least 8 rafas in the boat. We then gave the Persians some fresh ropes and repaired their rudder. When the "Mashuwa" was ready to leave, various people of the Sada, Al Bu Quwara, Kibisa, and Chaban tribes belonging to Ruwais and the interior of Katr sent out a boat to say that they would purchase the rest of the wheat, and they then brought it all ashore. The wheat was weighed on board the "Mashuwa," and brought ashore by three men who went out in the small "shuei." The Persians did not come ashore again.

While the Persians were ashore with us, they wrote out a paper (herewith produced) for us saying that they had agreed to pay us one quarter of their cargo in return for the help we gave them. The Persians of Aiyenat who are referred to as having been present had brought a cargo of firewood to Fuwairit for sale, and had come thence overland (about 13 miles) to Abu Dhaluf. Their boat had come round by sea.

The men who had come overland were three in number, but only two are named in the paper—Salim-bin-Ali and Ahmed-bin-Sabth. Rashid-bin-Muhammad-bin-'Afisha is a servant of Sheikh Hamad-bin-Esa of Bahrein. He is still in Katr.

The fourth man, Abdul Karim-bin-Saif-al-Mansuri, has gone to Ceylon. These witnesses did not sign or seal the document. I have not brought any witnesses with me to prove that they bought wheat of the Persians; it would be troublesome for them to come here.

Recorded on the 1st March, 1906, at the Political Agency, Bahrein.

(Signed) F. B. Prideaux, *Captain,*
Political Agent, Bahrein.

Inclosure 13 in No. 10.

Declaration by Khalifa-bin-Muhammad.

In the name of God the Compassionate and Merciful.

(Translation.)

I, KHALIFA-BIN-MUHAMMAD, do hereby declare that (our boat) drifted and was driven to the village of the Mananaa and was stranded there, and with my permission and good-will the men of the family of Esa-bin-Hamad took us out on condition of receiving one-quarter of the cargo.

The witnesses to this declaration :—

Abdal Rasool Hasan, nakhoda of the boat, and Salim-bin-Ali and Ahmed-bin-Sabth, of 'Aiyenat in Persia, and also Rashid-bin-Muhammad-bin-'Afisha and Abdal Karim-bin-Saif.

Executed on the 4th of Zil Qada, 1323.

(Signed) Abdul Rasool-bin-Hasan.
(Seal.)

Inclosure 14 in No. 10.

Sheikh Jasim-bin-Thani to Captain Prideaux.

(Translation.) *9th Zil Hijja*, 1323 (*February* 3, 1906).

I BEG to say that I have heard about a boat which stranded near Abu Dhaluf, and whose crew jettisoned a very considerable quantity of the cargo, and approached Esa-bin-Hamad and his two sons for help. They (Esa-bin-Hamad and his sons) came to their (i.e., the crew's) rescue and helped them out of the sea, took them into their houses, treated them well, and fed them for a number of days. The crew made a condition for the poor people of the village that whatever the latter might take out of the sea they would be entitled to one-fourth of it. Some small quantity could be taken out from the sea, and according to the condition the crew gave (the portion) over to the poor people. The remaining quantity they (the crew) themselves sold (to people). The said Esa-bin-Hamad did good to the crew by helping them and the boat out of the sea, and he gave them rope from out of his own boat, and repaired their rudder. They (in return) wrote

a note of thanks in the presence of all the other Persians, who signed it, acknowledging his good treatment of them and showing their gratitude. If, then, any one of them abused that good treatment (according to them all), you will, insballah, read the note of thanks and see the witnesses and the good and kindly treatment will not be undone (*i.e.*, not done in vain). I am grateful to you, and there was nothing calling for my interference in this matter, but I only wished to explain to you the circumstances of the case in order to acquaint you with these.

Inclosure 15 in No. 10.

Government of India to Major Cox.

Simla, May 3, 1906.

I AM directed to refer to the correspondence ending with your letter dated the 17th March, 1906, on the subject of the alleged case of piracy on a Persian boat at Abu Dhaluf, on the Katr coast.

2. The further Report which Captain Prideaux will submit after the complainants have had an opportunity of replying to the statement of Sheikh Esa-bin-Hamad is awaited.

3. In regard to the cases of piracy referred to in your telegram of the 23rd March, 1906, I am to observe that the British or Bahrein interests involved in each case were such as to warrant the Political Resident's interference. In the piracy on a Persian vessel which occurred at Abu Dhaluf in 1899, a portion of the cargo removed from the vessel was the property of a British Indian subject; while in the first of the three cases referred to in the letter from the Government of India in the Foreign Department dated the 6th February, 1902, the boat plundered by the Beni Hajir belonged to one Abdur Rahman Mutavva, of Bahrein; in the second, two vessels belonging to British Indian subjects were attacked; and in the third, the victim of the piracy was a Bahrein subject in the service of Messrs. Grey, Paul, and Co., who reported the incident to the Political Assistant at Bahrein. The fact that the victims of the piracies which occurred in 1899 were either British Indian or Bahrein subjects was specially referred to by Lieutenant-Colonel Meade when he demanded redress from Sheikh Ahmed, Chief of Katr, in his letter dated the 25th November, 1899. Further, Lieutenant-Colonel Kemball remarked in his letter to the Government of India dated the 1st October, 1900, that the Chief of Bahrein looked to the Government of India for redress and protection in cases where Bahrein boats and subjects were concerned.

4. Neither Bahrein nor British interests appear to have been affected, however, in the present case, and I am to say that the Government of India consider that Captain Prideaux would have been better advised had he refrained from the use of threats of retaliation until he had referred the matter through you for the orders of Government.

Inclosure 16 in No. 10.

Major Cox to Government of India.

(Confidential.) *Bushire, September* 16, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to refer to the correspondence ending with Foreign Department indorsement dated the 1st August, 1906, on the subject of a piratical act alleged to have been committed on a Persian boat by the Sheikh and villagers of Abu Dhaluf, a village on the northern Katr coast.

2. In the closing sentence of their letter dated the 3rd May, 1906, the Government of India expressed the view that Captain Prideaux would have been better advised had he refrained from the use of threats of retaliation until he had referred the matter to Bushire and Simla. With that view I beg to express my concurrence, in that the circumstances of the case were such that a delay of a week or ten days would not have rendered any action taken by the Political Agent less effective. At the same time, the instructions issued in paragraph 3 of Foreign Department letter dated the 6th February, 1902, were emphatic, and Captain Prideaux' action did not seem to me sufficiently divergent from the spirit of them to merit any official notice from me which might be calculated to damp his zeal in dealing with this important problem of piracy.

3. Apart from the above consideration, however, the Government of India, in their letter dated the 3rd May, 1906, to my address, laid stress on the fact that in this case neither Bahrein nor British interests were involved, and in addressing His Majesty's

Foreign Office it was chiefly on that ground that the Secretary of State for India based the conclusion that Captain Prideaux' action was not well advised. It is not, indeed, actually ruled that our active interference is uncalled for unless British or British-protected interests are involved, but I think that such is the inference that one would be inclined to draw from the correspondence, and it will be seen from the inclosures marginally noted that it has been so drawn by the Political Agent at Bahrein Before it crystallizes as a principle of policy in the Gulf, I venture to ask the Government of India to reconsider the position, in the hope that they may be led to modify their views.

4. It is indeed true that Colonel Meade, in his letter dated the 25th November, 1899, to Sheikh Ahmed-bin-Thani, especially referred to the fact that the victims and interests affected by the piracies of which he wrote were British Indian or Bahreini, but if I had not learnt the views recently come to by the Government of India, I should have been inclined to doubt the expediency of the special reference made to British interests on the occasion in question, and am disposed to think that in any case the allusion was only introduced as an extra inducement to Sheikh Ahmed to settle the cases quickly, and that there was no intention to suggest thereby that, had British interests not been involved, we should not have pressed him regarding their settlement.

I would note in support of this theory that no point was made of this fact in paragraph 2 of Colonel Meade's letter dated the 9th October, 1899, nor by the Government of India in their letter dated the 6th February, 1900, and I venture to urge that to allow it to be thought that we favoured such a doctrine now would be impolitic, and would greatly undermine that basis of humanitarian principle from which our mission in these waters has been so long pursued.

In this connection I beg to refer Government to the case mentioned by Captain Prideaux as having occurred in 1897. The details were duly reported to the Foreign Department at the time, the last communication which passed having been this Office letter dated the 24th December, 1897. It will be noted that in this instance, in which all the parties and interests concerned were Persian, the action of the "Lawrence" received the entire approval of His Majesty's Minister and apparently that of the Government of India.

5. I now venture to indicate what seem to me to be natural corollaries of the policy indicated by His Majesty's Secretary of State for India in his letter to the Foreign Office above quoted:—

(1.) The Chiefs of Trucial Oman are bound by their Agreements with us to abstain from all piracies without distinction. They have also undertaken to have no direct relations with foreign Powers. In the event of an Omani boat committing a piracy on a Persian vessel in which no British subject or British property was concerned, we should still be bound to interfere in the interests of the Persian Government or let the latter take punitive action on their own account.

(2.) By the same analogy in the case of a piracy by a Katr boat, we should have to take the requisite steps or face the alternative of allowing the Persian Government to interfere on the Katr coast, a measure which would considerably weaken our prestige among the Arabs of the Gulf, by whom we have up to now been regarded almost as a fetish instituted for the purpose of keeping guard over the peace by sea, for the greatest good of the greatest number. I may add that in this particular case I have it from Captain Prideaux that the Abu Dhaluf Sheikh told him that the people of Katr fully admit the right of the British Government to deal with all piracy cases, and were well aware of our traditions in respect of the preservation of the maritime peace.

I make these representations in no spirit of academic argument; but because I cannot but doubt whether all aspects of the question were present to the mind of Government when the Political Agent's action in the recent Abu Dhaluf case was considered.

6. To turn to another point suggested by the correspondence, I notice that His Majesty's Secretary of State for India, in his despatch dated the 4th July, 1906, to the Foreign Office, observes that His Majesty's Government have never recognized Turkish sovereignty on the Arabian coast below Qjair; but I would point out that in regard to the question of piracy the basis of our policy seems to be of a much more positive nature. We have not only decided that we do not consider that the location of a small guard of forty or fifty men at Al Bidaa has brought Katr under the jurisdiction of the Porte; we have further held that the presence of the Turks there does not preclude such action, whether at Al Bidaa or elsewhere on the Katr coast, as may be necessary to prevent or punish disturbances of the maritime peace. If that is still a correct

exposition of our attitude in regard to Katr, as I believe it to be, is it necessary, I respectfully ask, that we should from time to time entertain meddling and garbled complaints from the Turkish Government or Embassy of the nature now under reference whenever one of our officers or ships proceeds there on ordinary business? By doing so we seem to me to be gradually weakening our own position in regard to the Katr coast.

7. There are one or two items in Captain Prideaux' report accompanying which call for brief comment. The observations made by him in paragraph 6 do not appear to me to be pertinent. According to the ordinary traditions holding in these waters, the conduct of the people of Abu Dhaluf, if as described by the complainants, would certainly be regarded and treated as a piratical act and as a disturbance of the maritime peace.

In paragraph 7 the Political Agent does not differentiate sufficiently between Chiefs who are in Treaty relations with us and those who are not. On the occasion when he and I visited Doha and Wakra lately, the local Sheikhs of the Bin Thani family were absent in the interior, so the question of visits did not arise, but where we have no power to enforce or to punish refusal it seems to me a mistake to insist. As a rule, in these out-of-the-way places, where a Government ship is seldom seen, its presence is in the first place a cause of apprehension to the natives, and the Political Agent or Resident might waste days at a port where two or three hours would suffice if he waited for a suspicious local Sheikh to come off to the ship. I think the object in view will be better achieved by cultivating more intimate acquaintance with the Sheikhs rather than by the issue of any general instructions.

In the present instance, however, I see no reason to disapprove of the case being disposed of in the manner suggested by Captain Prideaux. If the Sheikh of Abu Dhaluf disregards his summons, it will probably be found possible to bring him to book by attaching some merchandize of his passing through Bahrein, should Government not consider it convenient to resort to the extreme measure of a boat expedition.

Inclosure 17 in No. 10.

Captain Prideaux to Major Cox.

Bahrein, August 24, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Office indorsement dated the 15th August, 1906, forwarding a copy of recent correspondence connected with the matter of the looting of a Persian cargo-boat by the villagers of Abu Dhaluf, in Katr, last January.

2. With regard to the communication made by the Turkish Ambassador in London to His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on the 14th June, 1906, I do not think that any repetition of the actual facts is called for, as the complaint is so clearly based on a badly-informed report submitted by the Turkish Military Commandant of the Bida' (Doha) fort to his superior, the Tabur Aghasi in Hasa (which district the Turks regard as Nejd), and does not, I feel certain, originate from any formal representation of the people of Abu Dhaluf, or even of the Sheikhs of Doha.

I would merely observe that I have never landed on the Katr coast at any places except Lusail, Doha, and Wakra, which are the head-quarter residences of the three leading members of the Bin Thani family, and that I have no reason to believe that my visits to any of these three places were in the least degree unwelcome to my hosts.

I now venture to submit the following remarks with reference to the Government of India's stricture expressed in paragraph 4 of the Foreign Department letter dated the 3rd May, 1906, to your address. Whilst recognizing that the Abu Dhaluf case was certainly one in which hasty action was uncalled for, and that I ought to have submitted the particulars of the complaint for the previous consideration of Government, I still humbly beg for a reconsideration of the ruling that the Government of India does not consider itself called upon to punish or repress pirates in the Persian Gulf so long as they refrain from damaging British or protégés' interests.

4. In the latter half of 1897, during the period of my service in Bushire as First Assistant to Colonel Meade, a case occurred in which a party of piratical Persians had attacked, wounded, and robbed the crew of another Persian boat near the mouth of the Shatt-al-Arab. Both the Commanders of the British gun-boat at Bushire and the

Royal Indian Mail steamer "Lawrence" were informed of the incident, and eventually the latter vessel captured the pirates, who were duly punished under an arrangement effected between the British Legation at Tehran and the Persian Foreign Office. Commander Hewett's action was entirely approved by Her late Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, and I also believe that the Lords of the Admiralty made no objection to the part taken by the "Pigeon" in the search, when it was reported to them by his Excellency the Commander-in-chief, East India Station. In this case no interests of ours were in any way concerned.

5. Moreover, before joining my present appointment at Bahrein, I was permitted to examine the archives of the Foreign Office, Simla, on the subject of piracy, and, though I brought no copies away, I arrived here with a vivid recollection of Lord Cranbrook's ruling (?) contained in correspondence forwarded under cover of the India Office despatch dated the 6th November, 1870, to the address of the Government of India "that the Resident in the Persian Gulf should be authorized to adopt all necessary measures for the preservation of the peace of the seas, without regard either to Turkish pretensions to sovereignty over the whole Arab coast, or to the recognition of Ottoman supremacy by individual Chiefs such as the Sheikh of Bidaa, or to the presence of Turkish officials at isolated points."

I also, of course, had taken notice of the opinion of the Government of India expressed in Major Daly's letter dated the 6th February, 1902, to the address of Colonel Kemball, that in future repetitions of piratical outrages speedy measures of redress should be adopted.

Unfortunately I had no copy of this letter in Bahrein; if I had remembered the exact terms of the Government's orders, I should probably have immediately reported the case to you for instructions, instead of preparing for a personal visit of inquiry to the scene of the occurrence, which was all that I contemplated doing when the "Sphinx" arrived here.

6. The more serious error which I feel, and which I trust that the Government will concur in thinking, that I committed was in regarding the Abu Dhaluf case as one of piracy at all. I was aware that two forms of piracy exist, which are generally known as land and sea piracy respectively. I believed that a land piracy was the outrage committed by people from ashore on a vessel in the water, but I subsequently had the opportunity of reading Bynkershoek's and Hall's definitions of this crime, which show that this view was incorrect.

The jurists say respectively: "Pirates are persons who depredate by sea or land without authority from a Sovereign," and "A piracy consists in acts of violence done upon the ocean or unappropriated lands, or within the territory of a State, through descent from the sea, by a body of men acting independently of any politically-organized society."

7. It now remains for me to submit my recommendations for the final disposal of the Abu Dhaluf case.

The guilt of the villagers I do not think can be judicially regarded as proved in view of the failure of the Persian boatmen to reappear before me, though I have taken every possible step to get more than one summons conveyed to them at Banda Rig. The question, therefore, of making the villagers restore the value of the wheat which they received may be dropped without hesitation. The failure of the Headman to come on board the "Sphinx" when summoned may also be regarded as atoned for by his subsequent visit to me in Bahrein, but I think that the reason for the Government's closing of the case should be clearly explained to him, and I hope that the principle may be confirmed that it is the duty of Headmen of such villages as Abu Dhaluf to come off to a Government vessel when they see that she clearly has business concerning them, or when they are summoned on board. The Chief of Bahrein always pays the first visit to the Political Resident on board the latter's vessel whenever he visits Bahrein, and, until last May, I understand that the Sheikhs of Doha have invariably done the same thing, to their harbours of Doha and Wakra. I do not ask for so great a compliment as this, but I think that the petty Headmen of quasi-independent villages on the Katr coast may reasonably be required to call upon me if they see my flag or are summoned on board.

I think, also, that they should always promptly send out a boat to inquire the business of any man-of-war anchoring off their shores, and to offer their services in case they may be needed.

8. In these circumstances, if Government accepts these views, I recommend that Sheikh Esa-bin-Hamad-al-Manna'ai be again summoned to Bahrein, under a written safe-conduct, to hear the decision of Government, and to be given a warning for his

future behaviour. If he disregards this summons, I recommend that he be severely punished by an expedition going over to seize his pearling-boats until he pays up a suitable fine and agrees to conduct himself in accordance with the Government's orders in the future.

Inclosure 18 in No. 10.

Major Cox to Government of India.

(Confidential.) *Bushire, October* 16, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to invite reference to paragraph 6 of my letter dated the 16th September, 1906, to your address, in connection with the Abu Dhaluf piracy case, in which I alluded to the numbers of the Turkish garrison at Al Bidaa.

2. As in Government documents or books on record the official strength is put down variously at anything from 1,200 men downwards, I asked the Political Agent, Bahrein, to ascertain the actual number at present there from some recent arrival. Captain Prideaux now writes that the Sheikh Nasir-bin-Sultan, Chief of the Soudan tribe in Al Bidaa, a well-known and reliable man, who has just arrived with letters from Sheikh Jasim-bin-Thani, informs him that the garrison now nominally consists of 200 men, but that half that number are usually missing on account of desertions.

[2337] No. 11.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 21.)

(No. 24.)

Sir, *Constantinople, January* 11, 1907.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 818 of the 22nd December respecting the state of affairs in the Vilayet of Diarbekir, I have the honour to transmit copy of a despatch from Mr. Graves, the Acting British Vice-Consul, reporting the satisfactory result of his representations to the Vali, and the energy which his Excellency is, temporarily at any rate, displaying in the repression of the lawlessness.

I have, &c.

(Signed) G. BARCLAY.

Inclosure in No. 11.

Acting Vice-Consul Graves to Mr. G. Barclay.

(No. 38. Confidential.)

Sir, *Diarbekir, December* 25, 1906.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 37 of the 3rd December, I have the honour to report that the following steps have been taken by the vilayet authorities with a view to the settlement of the Haini question and the protection of the Chaldean villages of Jezireh.

The Kaïmakam of Lidjé was brought to Diarbekir and severely reprimanded on account of the disorderly state of his district. He was then sent to Haini with ten foot and four mounted gendarmes, under orders to arrest the criminals and have them taken to Diarbekir. Meantime, twenty Suwaris had been sent from Lidjé to Haini, and on the return of the Kaïmakam four of the offending Kurds were arrested and brought here. The other criminals escaped, but the display of energy on the part of the Government seems to have produced a very good effect, and I hear through members of the Haini deputation, who were recently in Diarbekir, that robbery and lawlessness have ceased, and that the Kurds are considerably alarmed by the threat of vigorous measures. The former five zaptiehs, whose duty it was to patrol the Haini district, have been sent elsewhere and replaced by the fourteen men above mentioned.

With regard to the Jezireh villages, orders have been given that the garrison of Zakian, the removal of which had been petitioned for by some of the more influential Kurds, shall be maintained under the command of a fresh officer, while a post of ten or twelve soldiers has been established at Peshkhabour, on the frontier of the Mosoul vilayet. The Zayan tribe and its Chief, Kerwan Agha, who recently menaced the

village of Kerkibedos, will be removed from the district if the Ferik's instructions are obeyed.

The Chaldean Bishop of Diarbekir, whose news is generally accurate, has promised to keep me informed of the condition of the villages in this region, so that it will be possible to check the undertakings of the authorities.

The Vali of Mosoul, although it appears that he has been ordered by the Grand Vizier to report upon the steps taken to recover the property stolen from the Chaldean villages, declines to communicate with the Vali of Diarbekir. As the former is a brother of Izzet Pasha while the marauders are employés of the Dairch-i-Senieh, the prospect of effective measures being taken seems a slight one. The attitude of the Vali of Diarbekir has been exceedingly friendly whenever I have had occasion to communicate with him, and he is giving indication of greater energy than I believed him capable of displaying at the time of writing my last despatch.

Unlike previous Valis of Diarbekir, he does not receive the eshrefs or local magnates of the town and district in his private house, a circumstance which greatly facilitates his independence of action. At present, he is actually contemplating the removal of the Hamidieh Chief, Abdul Kerim, from Jezireh. If his Excellency is able to carry out this design he will not only greatly strengthen his own position in the country, but will also remove the principal source of danger to the Tigris Navigation. Abdul Kerim is supported and encouraged in his acts of lawlessness by one Osman Effendi, the Beledieh Reissi of Jezireh, a man of considerable means, no scruples, and great influence. The Bagdad Agents of the British firm of Blockey, Cree, and Co. are endeavouring to recover a debt of 62*l.* from Osman Effendi, who shows no inclination to pay. As it appears very unlikely that Messrs. Blockey, Cree, and Co. will recover their money without legal proceedings, I have written to His Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad, suggesting that he should request the Vali of Bagdad to summon Osman Effendi to appear in a Bagdad Court, where he would be less likely to influence the Judges than at Diarbekir, and where it would be convenient for Messrs. Blockey, Cree, and Co. to be represented. The Vali of Diarbekir has expressed his readiness to enforce any summons emanating from the Vali of Bagdad, and altogether this appears to be a happy opportunity of removing Osman Effendi, at least temporarily, from his sphere of influence.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. M. GRAVES.

[2346] No. 12.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 21.)

(No. 36.)

Sir, *Constantinople, January* 16, 1907.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 559 of the 24th December last, I have the honour to transmit copy of a *note verbale* which, after consultation with Colonel Picot, I have addressed to the Porte, requesting permission for the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company to use a third steamer on the Tigris in the same way as the two boats which are already running.

You will notice that I have avoided asking for the privilege as a merely temporary one, though the wording of the *note verbale* does not commit us to pressing for a permanent concession.

I have taken steps to put Colonel Picot in touch with the Civil List.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 12.

Note Verbale communicated to Ottoman Government by Sir N. O'Conor.

THE attention of His Majesty's Government has repeatedly been drawn of late to the extreme insufficiency of the existing means of river transport between Bussorah and Bagdad, and the resulting agglomeration of imported goods at the former port.

According to information in the possession of His Majesty's Government, very large quantities of merchandise, amounting to many thousands of tons, which are

mainly of British or British-Indian origin, have been for months past accumulating on the quays or in barges at Bussorah awaiting the means of conveyance.

Not only do these delays in themselves result in serious inconvenience and loss to the owners or importers of these goods, but, in consequence of the inadequacy of the Custom-house accommodation at Bussorah, to which His Britannic Majesty's Embassy has frequently had the honour of calling the attention of the Sublime Porte, the goods thus accumulated are subjected to a further risk of damage, loss, or deterioration through damp, defective storage, and exposure to the inclemencies of the weather, involving abnormally high rates of insurance, frequent contestations, and serious injury to the interests of all the parties concerned.

The very numerous complaints which have been received on this subject from exporters, importers, and underwriters alike suffice to prove the existence of a very real grievance for which an immediate remedy is imperative, and the continuance of which His Majesty's Government could not contemplate without serious concern. The Sublime Porte is fully aware that the protection and development of British commerce in all parts of the Ottoman dominions is a subject which engages the most constant attention of His Majesty's Government, and His Majesty's Embassy is convinced that, the Sublime Porte being likewise animated by a sincere desire to co-operate with it in endeavouring to remove all difficulties which tend to prejudice that commerce or to obstruct its legitimate expansion, which is to the common advantage of the two countries, it is only necessary to draw its attention to the existence of the evil in order to secure that its best efforts should be directed towards removing it, more especially since, in their opinion, the means of effecting at least a partial remedy are actually at hand.

The Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company, which, in virtue of an Imperial Firman granted in 1835 and the various Vizierial letters subsequently issued to them on various occasions by the Sublime Porte, are at present running two steamers with barges upon the river, have a reserve steamer in their dock near Bussorah which would be instantly available for the purpose of coping with the accumulation of cargo which is the source of complaint, and His Britannic Majesty's Embassy is in receipt of instructions from His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to urge upon the Sublime Porte that instructions should at once be transmitted to the authorities at Bussorah and Bagdad to permit the Company in question to utilize their reserve vessel in the same way as the two boats which they are at present running, for the purpose of relieving the congestion complained of.

His Majesty's Embassy is confident that the Sublime Porte will not hesitate, by its prompt compliance with the request of His Majesty's Government, to give one further proof of the sincerity of its desire to offer all legitimate facilities to British trade, and will accordingly grant the necessary authorization to the British Company which, in virtue of the Imperial sanction above alluded to, has for the last seventy years contributed so much to the development of the natural wealth of the vilayets of Bussorah and Bagdad, to the mutual advantage of both Great Britain and Turkey.

Constantinople, January 12, 1907.

[2849] No. 13.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 25.)

Sir, *India Office, January* 24, 1907.

WITH reference to your letter of the 5th June last relative to the proposed use of a distinctive flag by the Sheikh of Koweit, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to transmit, for the information of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, a copy of a letter from the Government of India reporting that Sheikh Mubarak hesitates to act in accordance with the advice given to him unless he receives an assurance from His Majesty's Government that he will not be allowed to suffer for it.

As Sir E. Grey is aware, the proposal is not that Koweit vessels should discontinue the use of the Turkish flag, but that they should use that flag with the word "Koweit" written upon it in Arabic letters.

It is a matter for the consideration of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Sir N. O'Conor should in the first instance be invited to express an opinion whether the Turkish authorities are likely to resent the proposed action on the part of the Sheikh. Should he apprehend that such would be the case, Mr. Morley thinks that the advantage to be gained would be so trifling that it is not worth while to press the proposal any further.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 13.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Secret.)
Sir, *Fort William, December* 27, 1906.

WE have the honour to refer to the correspondence ending with your telegram dated the 13th June, 1906, regarding the adoption by the Sheikh of Koweit of a distinctive flag for his shipping, and to forward a copy of letters from the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf on the subject.

2. It is clear from Captain Knox' Report, dated the 30th September, 1906, that Sheikh Mubarak is not disposed to adopt the distinctive flag unless he is fortified by an assurance that he will not be permitted to suffer from following the advice given him in this connection by the Political Agent. The grant of such an assurance might, however, involve us in responsibilities of a somewhat extended character, since the opportunities which the Turks enjoy of inflicting injury on the Sheikh and his subjects are by no means confined to Koweit territory, in respect of which we are already pledged to defend him. We note, however, that it was recognized by Sir N. O'Conor,* whose views were apparently accepted by His Majesty's Government, that in the event of the Sheikh's accepting our advice, it was incumbent on His Majesty's Government to see that he did not suffer from the consequences in so far as they depended on the action of the Turkish Government.

3. The position is not devoid of difficulty owing to the suspicions entertained of our intentions by the Turkish Government, but if the Embassy at Constantinople believe that some means can be found of securing the Koweitis against injury at the hands of the Turkish officials at Bussorah and other Turkish ports, we venture to suggest, for the consideration of His Majesty's Government, that the recognition of this obligation might now unobjectionably be conveyed to Sheikh Mubarak, more especially as, from Major Cox' letter of the 21st October, 1906, it appears that the Central Turkish Customs have gone so far as to insist on treating Koweit, and even Bahrein, as ports of the Turkish Empire, and it may be desirable to take some steps to controvert this action. If, however, His Majesty's Government are not prepared to give such a guarantee, we propose to direct Captain Knox to take no further steps in the matter.

We have, &c.
(Signed) MINTO.
KITCHENER.
DENZIL IBBETSON.
H. ERLE RICHARDS.
J. P. HEWETT.
E. N. BAKER.
H. ADAMSON.

Inclosure 2 in No. 13.

Major Cox to Government of India.

Bushire, October 14, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to invite a reference to the correspondence ending with Foreign Department indorsement dated the 31st July, 1906, on the subject of a distinctive flag for Koweit, and to forward a copy of the Political Agent's Report of what has since passed between himself and Sheikh Mubarak on the subject.

2. In view of the fact that once to me personally, and again in the presence of Major Knox and myself, as reported in the communication marginally noted,† Sheikh

* *Vide* his letter to Sir Edward Grey, No. 338, dated May 23, 1906.
† Resident to Foreign, July 16, 1905; ditto, March 18, 1906 (accompaniment).

Mubarak approved the pattern, and expressed his readiness to fly it, it is annoying to learn that he hesitates to adopt it now, though he has agreed to issue the articles which bear a coloured picture of the same flag.

At an ordinary time Major Knox would no doubt have suggested to the Sheikh that after the trouble gone to in the matter the Resident and Government would find it difficult to understand his going back on his undertaking, but it is so important at the present moment that the atmosphere between him and the Political Agent should remain clear, that, as far as the latter personally was concerned, it was, perhaps, as well that he left the matter where he did for the time being instead of pursuing the subject.

3. There can be little doubt that Sheikh Mubarak's specific object in acting as he has is that surmised by Major Knox in paragraph 5 of his letter, and I venture to hope that the Government of India will be pleased to recommend His Majesty's Secretary of State to authorize the accord of some measure of guarantee in connection with the use of the flag on the lines suggested.

Inclosure 3 in No. 13.

Captain Knox to Major Cox.

Koweit, September 30, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that at an interview I had with Sheikh Mubarak at the Agency on the 29th instant, I showed him the books and flags forwarded under cover of your letter dated the 14th September, 1906.

2. Sheikh Mubarak at once agreed to the issue of the ships' articles, but demurred to the use of the flag, which, he said, was sure to get him into trouble with the Turkish authorities at Bussorah.

3. I suggested that it might be possible to fly the flag in the Persian Gulf and Indian waters and to avoid using it in the Shatt-el-Arab, but the Sheikh replied that the Turks would be sure to hear of it, and would retaliate by oppressive measures not on the boat that flew the flag, but on all Koweit boats indiscriminately.

4. In the absence of instructions, I did not feel justified in expressing surprise at his failing to keep his promise made to you to use the flag. Sheikh Mubarak did not show any marked aversion to the new flag, but he cited the cases of Abdul Aziz-bin-Salim-bin-Badar* and of the agent of the firm of Shubaili who, he said, were still languishing in prison at Konia,† asking what offence they had committed, and receiving no reply. He also mentioned a case, of which I had not heard previously, when an agent of Sheikh Mubarak was enlisted and taken to El Hassa, and eventually bought a substitute to replace himself. The case seems to have been running for some two years, and the Turkish authorities were probably acting legally under the conscription, or the matter would have been mentioned before.

5. It was obvious that the inference I was intended to draw was that the Sheikh, though far too polite to say so, felt no confidence in our ability or willingness to protect him or his friends outside Koweit against Turkish intrigues and tyranny. He said that the Belgian trouble was nothing compared to the Turkish. In another discussion he said that he did not care what went on in Koweit itself, as he could always give an explanation that would satisfy the Turkish authorities, that what went on outside was what troubled him.

With reference to the arms clause in the book, he remarked that the Turkish authorities refused to allow any boat to carry more than three rifles for self-protection, a number that, in Shatt-el-Arab, was quite inadequate.

6. It is, I venture to think, probable that Sheikh Mubarak would willingly adopt the flag provided he received a guarantee that "His Majesty's Government would see that the Sheikh does not suffer for following the advice given to him," and I am sure that such a guarantee would improve our relations with the Sheikh to a marked degree.

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* Foreign Department indorsement, dated January 5, 1906.
† Resident to Foreign Department, dated February 12, 1905.—P. Z. C

Inclosure 4 in No. 13.

Major Cox to Government of India.

Bushire, October 21, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to report the following for the information of the Government of India.

2. It was rumoured locally some three weeks ago that certain packages for Sheikh Mubarak overcarried to Bussorah had been detained by the Customs there for duty, which the British India Steam Navigation Company demurred to pay. I was awaiting confirmation from Koweit or Bussorah before mentioning the incident to Government.

Mr. Consul Crow has since been good enough to send me news of it, and writes that the cargo in question has been impounded and a demand for full duty made on the ground that Koweit is Ottoman territory, and has no custom-house. He adds that the Central Turkish Customs have issued strict orders for the treatment of Koweit and Bahrein as ports of the Turkish Empire for customs purposes, and that His Majesty's Embassy at Constantinople think it undesirable to raise any question as to the status of Koweit for the sake of the duty on two bales of goods. He has accordingly advised the British India Agents to endeavour to reship the goods to Bombay.

3. The decision of His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople was no doubt arrived at after full consideration of the circumstances, and I am not prepared to question the wisdom of it.

On the other hand, I think the Government of India will realize from the past history of our dealings with the Ruler of Koweit that this is just one of those incidents which Sheikh Mubarak most resents, and which inevitably impress him with the timidity of our support; and that as long as it is considered necessary that our policy in regard to him should follow such lines, the Government of India cannot expect Sheikh Mubarak to be whole-hearted or single-minded in his dealings with their local Representatives.

There is no direct evidence to show that his recent hesitation to carry out his undertaking in regard to the use of the distinctive flag is due to this incident, but I may say this, that if I had known of it in time, I should have asked Captain Knox to postpone any communication to Mubarak with a view to the introduction of the new flag until a more propitious opportunity presented itself.

[2821] No. 14.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 25.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of inclosures in a letter from the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated the 3rd January, 1907, relative to a proposed British survey of the Tigris River.

India Office, January 24, 1907.

Inclosure 1 in No. 14.

Acting Consul-General Ramsay to Government of India.

(Confidential.) *Baydad, August* 28, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that on my way up the river I was much struck with the inaccuracy of the existing maps. It is not possible, even with the aid of local knowledge, to follow the course on any of the existing maps.

2. I therefore asked Captain Hamilton to assist me in preparing a Report on this subject, and I have now the honour to forward, for the information of the Government of India, four tracings which Captain Hamilton has been kind enough to prepare. A reach of the river was taken by chance and traced from one map. The same reach was then reduced to the scale of the first map and plotted by the system of identical

squares. These tracings in original I now inclose, as they may be of value for professional purposes. The result of Captain Hamilton's labours is more clearly shown, though the latitude and longitude of the various maps has been ignored in the tracing which was sent to you with my letter, dated the 25th instant, and to his Excellency the Ambassador with my despatch of the same date.

3. I think that we ought to take steps to obtain a more accurate survey of the river, and for the following reasons:—

(1.) The Tigris is undoubtedly the most important feature in the country, and with an accurate survey of this it would be much easier to increase our knowledge of the topography of the country along its banks.

(2.) Complaints have been made in the past that the navigation of the river is endangered by the increase of canals. With an accurate survey it would be possible to watch and record any changes in, or additions to, canals.

(3.) For the purpose of recording information about the limits of the various tribes a survey would be very useful.

(4.) An accurately surveyed line would much assist the rapid completion of military topographical information in case of military operations in Mesopotamia.

(5.) When a detailed survey is made for a railway from Bagdad to Bussorah, the proposed line will probably be described with reference to its latitude and longitude. It would be very convenient to know how the proposed line would run with reference to the river.

4. If any more accurate survey is desired, a somewhat difficult question at once arises as to how it should be obtained. The Turkish Government would give no facilities—indeed, they would probably resent any attempt to make a survey, for, as far as I can see, nothing could exceed the suspicion with which the British Government is regarded in this part of Turkey.

5. Captain Hamilton informs me that, if he were supplied with the necessary instruments for taking observations with an artificial horizon, including three chronometers, he could accurately fix the position of a number of points on the river. With these to guide him he thinks that he could draw in the intervening reaches of the river with some approach to accuracy, by taking careful compass observations and records of speed. If the Government of India could assist him with the services of a competent surveyor his task would be much easier, and his work would be better finished.

Captain Hamilton further informs me that, though the country is very flat and remarkably devoid of natural features, a sufficient number of landmarks exist to give great assistance to a surveyor.

6. If anything in the nature of a survey is required, it would have to be made from the "Comet," and it would have to be made during the months of March, April, and May, when the river is high. At other seasons of the year the surveyor would be too low down to see any landmarks.

7. The local expenditure on obtaining such a survey would not amount to much more than the cost of coal consumed.

8. If the Government of India thinks it would be wise to obtain more accurate information, I imagine that it will wish to consult his Excellency the British Ambassador at Constantinople before issuing any orders to me. For this reason I am sending a copy of this letter to the Embassy for information only.

Inclosure 2 in No. 14.

Government of India to Sir N. O'Conor.

(Telegraphic.) *Calcutta, December* 27, 1906.

FOLLOWING telegram has been repeated to the Political Resident at Turkish Arabia:—

"Do you see any objection to survey of Tigris proposed in Major Ramsay's letter of the 28th August, 1906, provided the observations are taken with due care and secrecy, and no party is landed anywhere and no flags or other landmarks are erected on banks?"

Inclosure 3 in No. 14.

Mr. G. Barclay to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P. *Pera, December* 29, 1906.

I SEE no objection to proposal mentioned in your telegram of the 27th December, 1906.

[2820] No. 15.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 25.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 16th instant, relative to affairs in the Aden Hinterland.

India Office, January 24, 1907.

Inclosure in No. 15.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P. *January* 16, 1907.

FOLLOWING telegram from Resident at Aden repeated by Government of Bombay on the 12th instant:—

"Evacuation of Dthali completed.

"General fighting between Amir and Shairi and Jihafi tribesmen is reported by Political Agent to be now proceeding on Dthali plateau. Amir has been worsted so far."

It is explained by Resident that Political Agent and escort remain; withdrawal of troops only is signified by evacuation.

[3027] No. 16.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 28.)

(No. 39.)

Sir, *Pera, January* 16, 1907.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 36 of the 16th instant, I have the honour to transmit copy of a telegram addressed to Izzot Pasha, the new Commandant at Bussorah, by the Minister of the Civil List, which has been sent to me by His Majesty's Consul at Bussorah. It would appear from this telegram that the Department of the Civil List is determined to extrude Messrs. Lynch from their share of the Tigris trade.

I have, &c.

(Signed) G. BARCLAY.

Inclosure in No. 16.

Minister of the Civil List to Izzet Pasha.

(Translation.)

(Telegraphic.) *September* 5, 1322 (*September* 18, 1906).

AN Imperial Iradé has been issued giving your Excellency the superintendence of the Hamidieh steamers and of the Imperial domain lands at Amara, in order that you may render special service and assistance, in various ways, in matters of control and finance. In acknowledgment of these services a salary of 3,000 piastres has been assigned to you.

Good general administration of the Imperial domain lands at Amara depends chiefly on the timely assistance of the military in maintaining the rights of the Civil List. The Civil List Department has entire confidence in your eminent loyalty and

obedience, and expects that you will exert yourself, both in this matter and, also, in that of placing the Hamidieh Steamboat Administration, which is a means of perfecting the credit and prosperity of Bagdad and Bussorah, on a far superior footing to that of Lynch's Company, and, in any case, in taking such steps as will enable merchants and others to do without that Company.

(For Minister of the Civil List)
(Signed) MUKHLIS.

[3038] No. 17.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 28.)

(No. 55.)

Sir, *Constantinople, January 23, 1907.*

WITH reference to Mr. Barclay's despatch No. 3 of the 4th instant and previous correspondence on the subject of affairs in Central Arabia, I have the honour to report that Mr. Lamb has been informed by the Grand Vizier that news has been received of the murder of Mita'ad ibn Rashid, the young Emir of Hail, who succeeded his father in the spring of last year. The murder was committed by a cousin of the Emir named Tillal, and another cousin named Hamoud has now become Emir.

Mita'ad ibn Rashid was an active and promising Ruler, who appeared to be making himself very popular with his tribesmen, and he had sided strongly with the Turkish authorities against Ibn Saood.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

[3039] No. 18.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 28.)

(No. 56.)

Sir, *Constantinople, January 23, 1907.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose copy of a telegram which I received on the 21st instant from His Majesty's Consul at Bussorah, reporting an act of piracy committed on a British-Indian sailing-vessel lying at anchor in front of the custom-house of Aboul-Hassib, a river port some 12 miles from Bussorah.

I at once caused urgent representations to be made to the Grand Vizier, pointing out to him the unpleasant impression that must necessarily be produced by the occurrence of another incident of this nature while we were still pressing for the arrest of the persons condemned by default in connection with the assault on Messrs. Lynch's establishment at Maghil in February last.

His Highness complied immediately with my request that strict injunctions should be telegraphed to the local authorities to take all possible measures for the pursuit and capture of the culprits, and I shall not fail to give the matter my close attention, and report further to you on the subject.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 18.

Consul Crow to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 5.)

(Telegraphic.) P. *Bussorah, January 21, 1907.*

ON the 18th instant about twenty armed river pirates made an attack on the "Vitalpassa," a British-Indian sailing-vessel of Cutch, which was at anchor opposite the custom-house at Aboul-Hassib, about 12 miles from Bussorah. The ship was boarded by ten of the pirates, who carried off her papers and the crew's money, clothing, and other effects.

I called on the Acting Vali, who promised to take energetic action and referred the matter to the police, but has done no more so far.

The Vali is absent at Nasriye, but I have requested him by telegraph to urge the local authorities to take strenuous action, and to cause the naval authorities to patrol the river. Instructions to that effect from Constantinople would be useful.

[3539] No. 19.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 31.)

Sir, *India Office, January 30, 1907.*

WITH reference to Sir E. Gorst's letter of the 10th December, 1906, in regard to the settlement of outstanding questions in connection with the Award of The Hague Tribunal respecting dhows flying the French flag in Muscat, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to transmit, for the consideration of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, a copy of telegrams which have passed between this Office and the Government of India on the subject.

Mr. Morley apprehends that it is no longer open to His Majesty's Government to revive the question of the six men whose names were included in the Zanzibar Agreement of May 1904.

With regard to the French claim that Omanis in the service of French subjects are entitled, under the Treaty of 1844, to fly the French flag, Mr. Morley would commend to Sir E. Grey's consideration the suggestion that the question should be referred to the Law Officers of the Crown for their opinion—

1. Whether, and in what circumstances, Omanis could become entitled to fly the French flag under Article IV of the French Treaty with Muscat of 1844; and

2. In what manner, supposing the right to exist, safeguards could be obtained against its misuse.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 19.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P. *India Office, December 18, 1906.*

MUSCAT Arbitration Award. Please refer to Memorandum dated the 8th ultimo by French Ambassador, and letter dated the 22nd ultimo from this Office to Foreign Office, forwarded respectively with Political Secretary's letters of the 23rd and 30th ultimo.

His Majesty's Government do not propose, subject to any observations you may desire to make, to resist reservations of French Government in respect of following points:—

Status of six Zanzibari dhow owners, jurisdiction over crimes on high seas, and finality of Laronce's opinion. As regards Omanis in French service, His Majesty's Government recognize far-reaching effects that might be caused by unreserved acceptance of French claim. Can you suggest any form of reservation, consistent with maintenance of French rights under the Treaty of 1844, which could be at all likely to acceptance? Award of Hague Tribunal, in last paragraph but one of reply to second question, refers to that Treaty as still in force.

Inclosure 2 in No. 19.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P. *January 29, 1907.*

MUSCAT Arbitration: Your telegram of the 18th ultimo.

As regards jurisdiction over crimes on high seas, and finality of M. Laronce's opinion, we note decision of His Majesty's Government not to resist French reservation. We would refer to letter dated the 26th June, 1906, from Resident, Persian Gulf, in respect to third point, viz., status of the six Zanzibari dhow owners. We would only add that local interests of Sultan, as well as our own, would be greatly prejudiced by grant to these men of right of full French protection when in Oman. It was not till a year after agreement to refer to Hague Tribunal that these persons were entered as protest. Suitable *quid pro quo*, such as mutual recognition of Sur Creek as inlet of Lagoon, where protection of French flag will not penetrate, should, if possible, be made condition without which, in our opinion, point should not be yielded. In order to avoid raising question of precise nature of rights conferred by Article IV of Franco-Muscat Treaty of 1844, we would suggest, in respect to Omanis in French service, that

assurance should be given to French Government that proposed arrangements do not affect these rights, whatever they may be. Present arrangements, it might be pointed out, will certainly not affect precisely similar powers which British Government possess under Article XIV of the Muscat Treaty of 1891. Law Officers of the Crown will no doubt decide the point, but it appears to us very doubtful whether, by legal interpretation of Article in either Treaty, right to fly national flag of their employer is conferred on Omanis in service of French or British. If affirmative decision is arrived at, and reservation of their right is insisted on by French, only thing we can suggest is that counter-reservation should be made to the effect that privilege is regarded by His Majesty's Government as being limited to recognized salaried servants of French, and for such period only as they are actually in French service. Sultan should, if possible, be furnished annually with lists of such persons, which should also be interchanged with us.

As regards Article IV of French Treaty, Major Cox remarks that great inconvenience would result from introduction of suggested practice in the Gulf, and that hitherto Article in question has never been taken advantage of in this manner.

[3805] No. 20.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 4.)

(No. 61.)

Sir, *Constantinople, January 26, 1907.*

WITH reference to your despatch No. 11 of the 8th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a *note verbale* which I have addressed to the Sublime Porte, concurring in their view that only the original maps signed by the Commissioners can be regarded as authentic in the event of any difficulty arising on any part of the demarcated boundary of the nine cantons.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 20.

Note Verbale.

HIS Britannic Majesty's Embassy has the honour to acknowledge receipt of the Sublime Porte's *note verbale* of the 26th August, 1906, transmitting a list of the discrepancies between the maps inclosed in His Majesty's Embassy's *note verbale* of the 30th March, 1906, and the original maps signed by the Joint Commissioners for the delimitation of the boundary of the nine cantons.

After consultation with the proper Department of the Government of India, His Majesty's Embassy has now the honour to inform the Ottoman Government that it concurs with the view expressed in the Sublime Porte's *note verbale* of the 26th August, 1906, to the effect that the original maps, signed by the respective Commissioners, are the only ones which, in conjunction with the Protocol signed at Sheikh Saïd on the 20th April, 1905, can be consulted as authentic in case of difficulty arising on any part of the demarcated line.

Constantinople, January 25, 1907.

[3806] No. 21.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 4.)

(No. 62.)

Sir, *Constantinople, January 26, 1907.*

WITH reference to Mr. Barclay's despatch No. 41 of the 18th instant, I have the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Consul-General at Smyrna on the subject of his action in connection with the dismissal of Kiamil Pasha, and inclosing copy of a letter in which his Highness expresses his gratitude to His Majesty's Government for their intervention on his behalf.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 21.

Consul-General Cumberbatch to Mr. G. Barclay.

(No. 3. Confidential.)

Sir, *Smyrna, January 18, 1907.*

I HAVE the honour to submit herewith a Report of my action in connection with the dismissal of his Highness Kiamil Pasha from the Governorship of this vilayet and his taking refuge at this Consulate-General.

On the night of the 12th instant I was informed that Kiamil Pasha had received a curt telegram from the Grand Vizier, telling him that he had been dismissed, and that the Sultan ordered him to proceed to Rhodes, where a house would be prepared for his use.

Early next morning, the 13th, I called on Kiamil Pasha, who appeared greatly affected by the blow, and I found that he looked upon the manner of his dismissal as an act of personal vindictiveness on the part of the Grand Vizier. He expressed himself alarmed for his safety and that of his sons, in the event of his being conveyed to Rhodes as a political prisoner, and confided to me that, on receiving, some two or three days before, a private intimation of his impending dismissal, he had telegraphed to the Sultan tendering his resignation, and begging to be allowed to reside at Smyrna, where he has a house of his own, or at Beirout, where the climate is suited to his delicate state of health.

The circumstance that he had received no reply from the Palace had increased his Highness' anxiety; and it was at his pressing request that I telegraphed soliciting your kind intervention, with a view of obtaining the revocation of the order of exile to Rhodes.

Soon after I left the Konak, signs of activity became visible in the *entourage* of the Commandant of troops. General Tewfik Pasha, who had now been appointed Acting Governor, and whose personal animosity towards Kiamil made of him a ready agent for the vigorous execution of any instructions regarding his Highness.

With the fate of Midhat Pasha before him, Kiamil Pasha decided to place himself under the protection of the Power which he felt he could most surely rely upon to befriend him; and late on Sunday morning, the 13th, he left the Konak and came to my official residence.

Feeling certain that His Majesty's Government would be disposed to extend its friendly protection to so staunch a friend of England in his hour of need, I unhesitatingly accorded to Kiamil Pasha the hospitality and safety of His Majesty's Consulate-General, for which action it was subsequently my gratification to receive the approval of His Majesty's Secretary of State.

His Highness telegraphed immediately to the Sultan, informing His Majesty of the step which he had taken, and explaining that his chief reason for placing himself under the protection of the British flag lay in the obstacles put in the way of his communicating with His Majesty, and adding that this very circumstance increased his fears for his own life, if, indeed, the unfriendly action of the Grand Vizier should result in his forcible removal to Rhodes. He begged His Majesty to allow him retire to Cyprus, his native land.

On the same day I had the honour to report to yourself and to His Majesty's Secretary of State the arrival of Kiamil Pasha at this Consulate-General, and to forward his prayer that the good offices of the British Government might be extended to him with a view to the rescinding of the order for his exile to Rhodes.

On the following day (Monday) commenced a flow of telegrams from the Palace that continued until the night of Thursday, the 17th. The earlier ones indicated annoyance at the step taken by Kiamil, and contained somewhat peremptory instructions for him to leave Smyrna without delay. Gradually, however, the messages assumed a more conciliatory tone. Kiamil Pasha was assured of the Sultan's forgiveness for taking refuge at the British Consulate, and became the recipient even of expressions of the Imperial favour, and of promises of perfect freedom at Constantinople. Emissaries came to persuade him to leave my house for his own residence pending his departure, and the Acting Vali received instructions that no difficulties were to be placed in his way, nor were the members of his household to be molested. At the same time the rigorous blockade of the Consulate, established half-an-hour after the Pasha's arrival, was gradually reduced to the surveillance of its approaches by police spies, and his Highness' personal attendants were no longer subject to arrest as at first.

Meanwhile the conditions laid down by Kiamil Pasha as essential to his leaving the shelter of the British Consulate were that he should receive the Sultan's assurance that neither he nor any member of his family should be molested, and that he should have reasonable liberty. He stoutly denied having done anything to merit the undignified manner of his dismissal, or the cruel punishment of exile, with which he was threatened. He asked me to convey to you his thanks for intervening in order to obtain the revocation of the Imperial commands for his exile to Rhodes, and he further entreated your high assistance to obtain such confirmation of the Sultan's assurances as might be "taken act of" officially by His Majesty's Embassy.

I was gratified to observe, in your telegrams of the 15th, 16th, and 17th, that you shared my humble opinion as to the importance of insisting upon a formal guarantee for Kiamil Pasha's future safety before he left the protection of the British flag, under which he had voluntarily placed himself; for, in the event of anything happening to his Highness after quitting Smyrna, it could hardly fail to affect the honour and prestige of Great Britain.

On the 17th the messages from the Palace became very urgent, as it was known that there was a mail-boat leaving for Constantinople; but Kiamil, while expressing his readiness to leave, frankly declined to do so until he heard that the Sultan's assurances had been confirmed to His Majesty's Embassy.

As your telegram of the 17th did not reach me till 9 P.M., it was impossible for his Highness to leave by the mail-boat on that day; but he telegraphed at once to the Palace that he would leave by the German steamer to-day (Friday), as, indeed, I also informed you at the same time. Mistrusting the Commandant of troops, who, although he had actually handed over the direction of affairs to the new Vali on the night of the 16th, was suspected of a desire to create trouble, and being unable to return to his own house in its now dismantled condition, Kiamil decided to pass the remainder of the night at the Consulate; and it was at 4 o'clock this afternoon (Friday, the 18th January) that he embarked on board the German steam-ship "Stamboul," which left for Constantinople at 8·30 P.M. In order to avoid any possible demonstration, I kept the hour of embarkation secret; and I am glad to be able to report that his Highness' departure from Smyrna took place quietly, and before the public were aware of his movements.

On leaving, his Highness desired me to convey to you his most sincere thanks for your energetic intervention on his behalf, and to assure you that he will ever remember with profound gratitude your kind help in his distress. He also begged me to express his thanks and deep sense of gratitude to His Majesty's Secretary of State for the protection and support extended to him by the British Government. When I finally took leave of him on board he handed me a letter, a copy of which I have the honour to transmit to you at his special request.

His Highness discussed with me during his stay the probable causes of his disgrace. He could only think of two reasons as being likely to have induced the Sultan not only to deprive him of office but also to exile him. The first is connected with the succession to the throne, which, it appears, the Sultan is anxious to secure for one of the younger Princes to the exclusion of Prince Reshad, the rightful heir. Doubting Kiamil's adherence to his project, which, it is believed, has the Sheikh-ul-Islam's "fetva," it was considered prudent to remove him to a place where he could offer no resistance to the carrying out of His Majesty's plans.

I have it from other sources that the "Young Turkey" party thwarted the Sultan's project, of which they had got wind, by posting up a Proclamation in Constantinople to the effect that if the new Sovereign, whoever he might be, on whom the Sultan's choice might fall, did not declare his intention of reigning on constitutional lines, they would join hands with the Armenian Revolutionists, and have recourse to the same methods as the latter, in order to secure their demands.

The other and more likely reason for his disgrace is that the Grand Vizier, Ferid Pasha, who, owing to the Sultan's occasional appeals to Kiamil for advice on political matters, has always regarded him as a possible rival, has taken advantage of certain charges of connivance with brigands, brought by the military authorities against Rear-Admiral Saïd Pasha, Kiamil's favourite son, in order to bring about his rival's downfall.

About a month ago, the sudden departure for Constantinople of Saïd Pasha gave rise to rumours that Kiamil Pasha was to be recalled, Saïd Pasha to be transferred as Commodore to Salonica, and Juad Bey, the Pasha's grandson and Director of the Political Department here, appointed to a Consulate.

Saïd Pasha seems to have succeeded in satisfying the Sultan of his innocence, and he accordingly returned to Smyrna, from which it was gathered that the blow had been averted. But it would appear that the question of Kiamil's dismissal, or transference as Vali to Rhodes, was subsequently brought before the Council of Ministers; and the Grand Vizier succeeded in getting a "mazbata" presented to the Sultan in such a shape as to succeed in obtaining an Imperial Iradé for Kiamil's dismissal and exile.

In conclusion, I beg leave to state that during the ten years of my residence in Smyrna I have had the closest relations, both official and personal, with Kiamil Pasha, and that during the whole of that period his conduct has never been of a nature to give rise to the slightest suspicion of malpractice or disloyalty. I have reason to believe that my colleagues, without exception, have expressed the same opinion of him in their reports to their respective Embassies; and all, high and low, join in extolling the lofty qualities displayed by his Highness during the twelve years of his administration.

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that his son, Saïd Pasha, has laid himself open to the charge of enriching himself at the expense of suitors for favours obtainable through his influence, not so much from his father as from the various Government Departments where he could make himself heard; but it is difficult to credit the accusation of connivance with the very outlaws whom his father worked so hard to destroy, and of whom his Highness would have successfully cleared the country, but for the hostile attitude of those very persons who have lent themselves as tools to the Grand Vizier to bring about Kiamil's downfall.

At the most his Highness may, perhaps, be blamed for shutting his eyes to the peccadilloes of his son, but he himself did nothing to deserve dismissal and banishment; and I cannot help feeling that the successful intervention of His Majesty's Government on his behalf will redound to the honour and prestige of Great Britain in this country.

I have, &c.

(Signed) H. A. CUMBERBATCH.

Inclosure 2 in No. 21.

Kiamil Pasha to Consul-General Cumberbatch.

Dear Mr. Cumberbatch, *Smyrna, January* 18, 1907.

BEFORE leaving your hospitable roof, I beg to express to you and Mrs. Cumberbatch, my most sincere thanks for the kind consideration I have received at your hands, and your many acts of unremitting kindness.

I would also tender to you personally and most especially my gratitude for the firm support your Government has vouchsafed me, support which in the greatest measure is due to the steps you have taken in my defence.

Further, I would ask you to be good enough to convey to His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople my grateful thanks for the trouble he has taken in advancing my cause, and would beg you to be the earnest interpreter of my gratitude, and thanks to His Majesty's Secretary for Foreign Affairs for the high protection accorded, and the invaluable assistance and help given me in parlous times.

Believe me, &c

(Signed) M. KIAMIL.

[3808] No. 22.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 4.)

(No. 64.)

Sir, *Constantinople, January* 28, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, being a quarterly report on the affairs of the vilayet.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 22.

Vice-Consul Dickson to Mr. G. Barclay.

(No. 14.)

Sir, *Van, December* 31, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to submit a quarterly report on the affairs in the vilayet.

The harvests this year have been bad, and the grain is now about double the

normal price, consequently a certain amount of distress is likely to occur during the cold weather. Some snow has fallen, but, having mostly melted, the country is still quite open. The weather this autumn has been bad for agriculture, as, owing to rain not coming till late in October, ploughing was retarded, and only half the usual amount of wheat has been sown. The missionaries state that this is owing to the heavy taxation on the Christians, which has forced them to sell their cattle, and thus prevented them from ploughing so much, but I am inclined to think this is exaggerated.

The epidemic of scarlatina has been very severe, and it is judged that some 2,500 deaths have occurred, mostly among children. It is now nearly finished, though there is a lot of diphtheria, typhoid, and pneumonia about, though I am informed that these diseases come every winter.

The Armenian revolutionists, I am informed, are quarrelling among themselves. The Tashnak, the more powerful party, appear to have assumed the government of Armenians in the vilayet. They adjust their quarrels, draw up regulations and laws, the non-compliance with which they punish severely, in some cases with death, taxing the already overtaxed Armenian and forcing him to buy arms. I am informed by the missionaries, whose view may be biassed, that their leaders, mostly foreign Armenians, are exerting an evil influence on the young men, as, being atheists, they teach them to scoff at religion. If this is the case, and this movement spreads, in time the Armenian question will become one of Turkish extermination of revolutionary Armenian atheists, and not oppression of Christians, which I doubt would obtain the same sympathy in Europe. The following is an example of the way the Revolutionary Committee manage affairs, and occurred in Van last month.

A certain Armenian owed a Mussulman 30*l*. The Moslem had proof but no receipt, and the Armenian would not pay him. An Armenian intermediary told the Moslem that if he would give him two sacks of sugar he would get the Revolutionary Committee to enforce payment. The Moslem gave the two sacks of sugar, when certain agents of the Committee called on him, verified his proofs, and asked him if he would be content with 20*l*. in quittance. He accepted, whereupon they gave him 20*l*. and his two sacks of sugar back, telling him that justice required no intermediary. The Armenians are in great fear of this Committee, and many instances occur of men passing themselves off as agents of the Committee and forcing Armenians to various actions. Circumstances lend themselves to this fraud, as the real agents dare not carry any seal or badge of office. The Vali himself was imposed on in this way some eight weeks ago, and was induced to liberate an Armenian accused of theft. At the present moment the revolutionaries are quiet, as most of the leaders, including Aram, the Chief of the Tashnak, are reported to be in Russia, occupied with the elections.

In my No. 13 of the 3rd December, 1906, I mentioned that my Russian colleague here had been making himself popular among the Nestorians, giving them presents and money. I may further add that he has been doing the same among the more influential Kurds, and especially those unfavourable to the present régime. Some of these Chiefs have come into Van to visit him

The chief topic of interest here at present is the departure of His Excellency Tahir Pasha, the Vali, and the appointment of his successor in Ali Riza Bey, who I am informed has already left Constantinople on his way here. Tahir Pasha suffers from a tumour on his neck. Some time ago he asked for leave to go to Constantinople to be operated on, but was refused. It now appears that his nephew, Haider Bey, Kaimakam of Shattakh, went to Constantinople on leave two months ago, taking with him a photograph of the Vali's neck, which he showed to the authorities with such effect that the Vali received a telegram saying that, as his malady made him unfit for his work, he was to come at once to Constantinople and be operated on, and that if the operation were successful they would consider giving him another post. Naturally the Vali is greatly distressed at having to travel with his family at this unseasonable time of the year, and his enemies say that he has been dismissed in disgrace. They attribute the cause to his want of action in the affair at Hunzeroot, reported to you in my cypher telegram of the 10th October, 1906, when revolutionaries were reported in a village on the Bitlis border. The Bitlis Vali sent troops, but the villagers had fled, and no revolutionaries were found. Some empty powder boxes were reported to have been found, and the Bitlis force burned the village. Tahir Pasha sent a force, but they remained on the Van boundary and took no part in the affair, the Vali stating that they found no revolutionists. He enemies now say that the Bitlis Vali reported that there were revolutionaries, that they came from the Van Vilayet, and that they returned there, and that Tahir Pasha took no measures against them. The fact remains that the Bitlis

Vali, who from my own and every one else's experience is *canaille*, has been made a Vizier, while Tahir Pasha has been recalled.

I have, &c.
(Signed) B. DICKSON, *Captain, R.F.A.*

[3810] No. 23.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 4.)

(No. 66.)
Sir, *Constantinople, January 28, 1907.*

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Damascus, embodying his quarterly Report on the state of the vilayet.

Mr. Devey comments strongly on the corruption of the officials and the inactivity of the Vali in suppressing disorders.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 23.

Consul Devey to Mr. G. Barclay.

(No. 1.)
Sir, *Damascus, January 2, 1907.*

I HAVE the honour to submit herewith my general Report for the last quarter.

No official changes of importance took place during the quarter in this vilayet, except that Mustapha Nouri Pasha, the Commandant of the 5th Army Corps, was charged with Presidency of the Arazi-i-Seniyeh Commission, replacing "Liva" Ali Mansour Pasha, who has been, since the transfer of Mushir Hakki Pasha, acting in this post, and who still occupies the place of Vice-President in that Commission. It was also reported that Jemal Bey, the Mutessarif of the Hauran, will be transferred to a similar post at Kerak, while the present Governor of Kerak will be dismissed. The post of Maan Kaimakamlik is still vacant, and it was rumoured that Emir Nejib Shehab, ex-Kaimakam of Merj-Oyoun, within the Vilayet of Beirout, who is now at Constantinople, succeeded in being nominated to that post.

The Kaimakam of Baalbec, Ibrahim Adham Bey, during his six months' stay at his post, proved to be far from enjoying the confidence of the people there, and complaints as to his corruptness were in the last quarter very frequent. Similar complaints, but on a much higher scale, form now a topic of the public talk at this city as to the open corruptness and villainy of the Director of Post and Telegraph, Riza Bey, who is incessantly pocketing bribes and robbing on behalf of every official with whom he has some influence, especially the Vali, from whose good-will he makes profit, and enriches himself with money of applicants in all Departments.

The public security in this vilayet throughout the quarter was in every sense wanting, and the respective leaders of Bedouins, Druses, and native Moslems, are following their own ways in dealing with their neighbours and their subordinates. Early in November a Bedouin band killed and robbed three Moslems, one Damascene, and two Jeruslians near Douma, a few miles to the north of this city. About the end of the same month, one Kurd killed and another wounded were picked up near Kiswah, a few miles to the north-east; their assailants are said to be Druses. The Moslems of Kuneitra district were planning a league against the Druses, and trying to rouse the Mahommedan animosities among the Bedouins and Circassians of that region, directing their movement more specially against the Druses of Majdel-Shems, who lost one of their number, and believe that he was killed by the Moslems of Hubbariyeh in Hasbeiya district. About the middle of December a dispute took place at the Druse village of 'Ahirah, in the Jebel, between the Druses and the garrison there, in which the former attacked the barracks and were volleyed by the troops within and forced to retire disorderly, leaving two men and three cows killed and a woman wounded. One week later a Persian Haj caravan, on their way to meet the main body at Tebouk, were waylaid by a large band of Bedouins at Khan-ez-Zebib, about 300 kilom. from Damascus, who killed three Persians and carried away animals and provisions.

Other incidents of less serious results were frequently occurring in different parts

of the vilayet, as also actual murders in the city itself, so that the highways and roads are by no means safe or easy to cross. Everybody attributes this state of things to the carelessness and inactivity of the Vali, who is doing very little or nothing towards calming the country. Unfortunately, the three persons upon whom, in their respective positions, the general tranquillity is dependent—viz., the Vali, the Commandant of Gendarmerie, and the Director of Police—are almost equals in negligence and incapacity. Although the above strictures may appear to be severely and strongly put, I cannot but think they are justified by present circumstances.

The Greek Catholic Patriarch returned here about the middle of November and left again towards the end of that month for Egypt viâ Haifa and Jerusalem. The Persian pilgrims who accompanied the Mahmal this year passing through Damascus were about 500, which is much the same as usual.

Rashid Bey, ex-Mutessarif of Jerusalem (now Vali of Monastir), arrived here on the 10th December from Haifa, and left on the 12th for his new post viâ Beirout. He took the Damascus road from Haifa to Beirout, for there was no steamer at the time to take him by sea, owing to the roughness of the sea.

The public health in this vilayet was fairly good during the quarter, except for a few cases of small-pox, which has, in fact, disappeared.

The usual autumn rainfall, though not heavy, was enough to give promise of good prospects to the peasants, who are sowing their seeds with full hope and confidence. Last year's crops are bringing good prices in the markets of Syria—about 10 per cent. higher than usual—and the demand also has been good.

The Electric Company has been lately doing better in realizing the hopes and carrying the promises to execution.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. P. DEVEY.

[3811] No. 24.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 4.)

(No. 67.)
Sir, *Constantinople, January 28, 1907.*

I HAVE the honour to report that I was received in audience by the Sultan on the 25th instant, and that I found His Majesty looking very much better than when I had seen him about four months ago. He was good enough to express his pleasure at my return, and to be particularly pleased at my wife accompanying me to the Palace.

I told His Majesty that I was instructed by my Gracious Sovereign to convey to him the assurance of his friendly feelings and good wishes, and that he had received with great satisfaction the news of His Imperial Majesty's restoration to health.

The Sultan replied that he was always grateful for any expressions of friendly feelings on the part of the King, and that he had lately received a telegram from His Majesty in reply to his felicitations on the anniversary of his accession.

The Sultan carried on an animated conversation with my wife and myself for nearly an hour, and then reverted to the messages I had sent to him through Ghalib Bey, his Grand Master of Ceremonies, as reported in my despatch No. 49 of the 21st instant.

He had duly weighed the observations I had submitted to him, and he now assured me that the several demands made by General Degiorgis Pasha, in regard to the reorganization of the gendarmerie, would be approved, and that he would send for the General next day and tell him so.

I said His Majesty's Government would hear this with satisfaction, but that unless His Imperial Majesty gave an order once and for all that no obstructions should be placed in the way of the scheme of reorganization and that the obstructions of the local authorities should cease, fresh difficulties would again arise which would jeopardize the success of the onerous task intrusted to the General and his Adjoints.

His Majesty shook his head, but made no reply.

The Sultan then referred to the 3 per cent. customs duty, expressing regret at the delay in putting this matter through.

I said that you were in a very difficult position. British merchants trading with this country did not at all fancy the proposed augmentation of duty, and in order to reconcile them to it you must be able to prove to the country and to the House of Commons that certain valuable concessions affecting British trade had been acquired

in compensation for the customs duty. I said that several explicit demands in this regard had already been presented by the Embassy to the Sublime Porte, and that upon the reply to these demands depended in great measure the consent of His Majesty's Government to the 3 per cent.

The Sultan said he had not yet seen these demands, and asked for details respecting their nature and character. I told him the main features, and explained that all these demands were indisputably in the interest of Turkish as well as of British trade.

The Sultan said that as far as he understood them this seemed to be so, and that he thought they could be accepted.

I then went on to say that the hindrance to our trade was particularly marked in the Bussorah and Bagdad region, where there was such a congestion of traffic on the river that upwards of 40,000 packages were delayed at Bussorah for want of sufficient means of river transport. This congestion had lately become so intense that the Euphrates and Tigris River Navigation Company had been obliged to stop all further consignments from Europe for the present, as they were unable to deal with the goods already collected at Bussorah. This condition of things prevailed although the above-mentioned British Company had a steamer lying idle at Bussorah which they were not allowed to use on the river. I was sure His Imperial Majesty would understand the loss caused to British trade by this prohibition, and, in view of the common interests which both countries had in developing their trade to the utmost, I earnestly begged for the intervention of His Majesty in order that permission might be accorded to the British Company to put a third steamer on the river.

His Majesty did not give me a definite answer one way or the other, and I did not think it advisable to press the matter under the circumstances, but I rather gathered that I could more or less count on his good-will and support.

His Majesty then referred to the reforms in Macedonia, and said that he had complied with the several requests of the Powers, and that the Financial Commission was effecting considerable reforms, and that he had lately sent down a Special Commission to inquire into the judicial system.

The Sultan spoke as if he really thought the Powers were satisfied with what had been done, and I could not help thinking that the Grand Vizier was keeping His Majesty in the dark respecting the various complaints made in regard to this subject by the Representatives of the Great Powers. As, however, it was only three days since I had enlightened His Majesty as to the obstruction to the gendarmerie reorganization, and I was most anxious to obtain a settlement of this question before embarking on what might prove an unpleasant discussion, I did not comment upon the observation made by His Majesty.

After the lapse of about an hour and a-half His Majesty began to show signs of fatigue, and he brought the audience to an end by asking me to convey his best compliments to His Majesty the King.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

[4136] No. 25.

Admiralty to Foreign Office.—(Received February 6.)

(Confidential.)
Sir, *Admiralty, February 4, 1907.*

WITH reference to your communication of the 18th ultimo, inclosing copy of a complaint received from the Vali of Bussorah respecting the alleged hoisting of the British flag at Nejwa, I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to request you to inform Sir Edward Grey that the Commander-in-chief on the East Indies Station has been instructed to report on the subject.

It appears probable that the complaint has arisen out of the visit of His Majesty's ship "Sphinx" to El Katif last November (*vide* Admiralty letter of this date), but there is no record of the British flag having been hoisted at Nejwa, or anywhere in that locality.

Nejwa, a coral reef in latitude 26° 33′ north, longitude 50° 16′ east, has two sandy cays on it; one is always above water, the other only dries at low water. The nearest

part of the mainland is 6 miles from the edge of the reef, and it is therefore outside the ordinary territorial limit. It might be considered quite as much a dependency of Bahrein as of El Katif.

I am, &c.
(Signed) C. I. THOMAS.

[4306] No. 26.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 8.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a despatch to the Government of India, dated the 1st February, relative to the collection of revenue by Turkish officials at Al Doka.

India Office, February 7, 1907.

Inclosure in No. 26.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

My Lord, *India Office, February 1, 1907.*

WITH reference to your Excellency's letter in the Foreign Department dated the 11th October, 1906, relative to the collection of dues at Al Doka on the Subaihi border on behalf of the Turkish Mudir of Mufalis, I forward herewith copy of correspondence with the Foreign Office on the subject.*

2. It will be seen from the despatch dated the 14th December, 1906, from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Constantinople that the *pro-memorid* of the 4th December, 1906, addressed to the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, is based on a Memorandum by Mr. Fitzmaurice, in which it is pointed out that the collection of dues would seem to have taken place actually at Nobat Absi, on the Turkish side of the border, but that the Turkish authorities were not justified in ordering the rebuilding of a post at Nobat-al-Mikrad, which is in Subaihi territory.

3. I request that I may be furnished with a report from the Resident at Aden on the points raised in Mr. Fitzmaurice's Memorandum.

I am, &c.
(Signed) JOHN MORLEY.

[4574] No. 27.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 11.)

(No. 75.)
Sir, *Constantinople, February 5, 1907.*

WITH reference to your despatch No. 510 of the 22nd November, 1906, I have the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Vice-Consul at Van, reporting on the burning of the Van prison and the affray at Rumta.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 27.

Acting Vice-Consul Dickson to Mr. G. Barclay.

(No. 1.)
Sir, *Van, January 13, 1907.*

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatches of the 14th and 21st December.

If I may observe, the circumstantial report of M. Hagopian's correspondent is

* Not printed.

principally unsubstantiated fiction, and cannot be treated seriously, though I will observe on one or two facts that he states.

M. Hagopian's letter and the Report lead one to suppose that the Consuls held an inquiry in the prison, and that the Vali was present. This is not the case; the Consuls held no inquiry, nor have they the power to do so.

Husni is not a relative of the Vali in any way. At the request of the Consular Corps he was relieved of his appointments, and relapsed to his former status as an officer of gendarmerie at Bashkala. Though actually he did not leave Van, he was sent for trial before the Van Tribunal, who found no legal case against him, and he has within the last few weeks been rehabilitated.

All the evidence I can get tends to show that Muggerditch was killed by blows on the head from butts of rifles.

The letter in the hands of Armenians, purporting to be from the Vali to Husni, I would suspect to be a fabrication. I can hear nothing of it here. The Vali rarely writes letters, and there would be no reason for him to write to Husni, whom he sees continually. I may add that this Husni is acknowledged by every one to be a *canaille*, but is supposed to have had money dealings with the Vali, who is therefore unable to chase him. The Vali is now leaving, and when his successor arrives it is my intention, in conjunction with my Russian and French colleagues here, to endeavour to have him deposed.

I wish to mention an incident which occurred in Tiari some few weeks ago, which, though small, might possibly have subsequent importance.

An officer and sixty soldiers, with a tax collector, who had been collecting the taxes in the Chal district, and were on their way back to Bashkala, were escorted through Lower Tiari by men of Malik Berkho, of Tkhub, who took them as far as Marsawa, on the Zab, where Upper Tiari, Malik Ishmael's country, commences. Here leaving the soldiers under a sergeant, the officer went on to Chumba, Malik Ishmael's village, about 3 miles on, to ask for permission and guides to go through Upper Tiari; this Malik Ishmael granted, and sent a messenger to tell the sergeant to bring the soldiers to Chumba. On the way to Chumba, seven Tiari men from the village of Rumta, armed with sticks, waylaid the soldiers and demanded their arms. The soldiers appear to have feared some combined attack, as the sergeant recommended them not to shoot but to give up some rifles. Four rifles were taken, and the Rumta men returned to their village, where some of their companions, hearing that rifles were being given away, followed the soldiers and demanded more arms; five more rifles were given up. One man tried to take the sergeant's rifle from him, pulling it by the muzzle. The sergeant objected, and in the scuffle the rifle went off, killing the Rumta man. The soldiers then started to shoot, and the Tiari men retired, some two or three being wounded. Malik Ishmael and the officer, hearing the fusillade, arrived on the scene and made the peace. As a Tiari man had been killed, and the soldiers seem to have been afraid of reprisals in that difficult country, the officer arranged to give up their baggage mules as blood money. The Rumta men refused to give up the nine rifles; but Malik Ishmael told the officer he would try and get them back, and return them later after the excitement had cooled down.

Malik Ishmael sent a messenger to me with this story. I have talked with the Vali and the Ferik about the affair, and the Vali has approved of the gift of the mules as blood money, and the Ferik has promised to do nothing, provided that the rifles are returned. I have sent Malik Ishmael word that he must return the rifles at all costs. The Nestorians are rather unsettled at present, owing to oppressive raids this last year by Suto Agha of Oramar, the Jeriki Kurds, and Sheikh Saddig's men. The Nestorians of the districts of Lewan and Ishtazin have informed me that they propose leaving their districts *en masse* in the spring if something is not done to punish these Kurds. As I explained in my No. 12 of the 1st December, 1906, Malik Ishmael may have difficulty in returning the rifles, and so I mention this incident.

I have, &c.
(Signed) BERTRAM DICKSON, *Captain,*
Royal Field Artillery.

[3539] No. 28.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir, *Foreign Office, February* 16, 1907.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 30th ultimo relative to the application of the Muscat Dhows Arbitration Award, in which it is suggested that certain questions in connection with the French claim that Omanis in the service of French citizens are entitled, under the Treaty of 1844, to fly the French flag, should be referred to the Law Officers of the Crown for their opinion.

Sir E. Grey's attention has been called to the fact that it is not clear from M. Cambon's Memorandum of the 5th November, 1906, what is the exact nature and scope of the claim now advanced by the French Government, and he is of opinion that it would be desirable, before proceeding further, to endeavour to obtain from them an explicit statement on the point in question.

I am to inquire whether the Secretary of State for India concurs in this view, and, if so, whether he approves the terms of a proposed communication to M. Cambon on the subject, copy of which, in draft form, is herewith annexed.*

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GORST.

[6373] No. 29.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 26.)

(No. 105.)
Sir, *Constantinople, February* 18, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 45 of the 1st instant, sending me a despatch, with its inclosures, from the Secretary of State for India, respecting the Koweit flag.

I had the honour to report my view of the question in my despatch No. 358, Confidential, of the 23rd May, 1906, but I venture to make a few additional remarks now on the broader aspects of the question.

After mature consideration His Majesty's Government entered into a special agreement with the Sheikh of Koweit, which, on the one hand, imposed certain restrictions upon him, while, on the other, it implied more or less a guarantee of protection and the integrity of his territory. This agreement is decidedly of importance as regards our future negotiations respecting the *débouché* of the Bagdad Railway. It is not formally or officially acknowledged by the Ottoman Government, yet it has weight with them, and would influence their course of action under certain circumstances. It is, moreover, a difficulty in the way of the Germans, which I think has already accounted in some degree for their desire to come to an understanding with us in regard to the Bagdad Railway. Any exhibition of weakness on the part of His Majesty's Government, or of a desire to shirk the consequences of our agreement with Koweit, would materially affect our position, which is a political factor in the situation which, I venture to think, His Majesty's Government ought not lightly to ignore.

As regards the question as to whether the Sheikh of Koweit should be pressed to keep his promise of flying a distinctive flag on Koweit craft, I am inclined to share the opinion of the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf to the effect that we should use great care in the matter, and choose a propitious opportunity for making the suggestion, the more so as, should His Highness act as we urge him to do, I do not see how we can honourably or with credit refuse him protection, and we may unnecessarily have raised a very troublesome question.

We have already marked our connection with Koweit by the appointment of a Resident, and, I believe, by the establishment of a British post office, as well as sundry other ways.

I would suggest that the Sheikh should at first fly the new flag in his Konak, or other Government buildings at Koweit, where we should have no difficulty in affording

* Draft Memorandum to M. Cambon.

him protection if the Turkish Government attempted, which is very unlikely, to interfere with his action. The Imperial Government will thus get accustomed to the change, and the way will be prepared for its adoption by degrees on the high seas.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

[6374] No. 30.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 26.)

(No. 106.)
Sir, *Constantinople, February* 18, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Bussorah, reporting orders issued by the Turkish authorities in regard to Nejwa.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 30.

Consul Crow to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 6.)
Sir, *Bussorah, January* 25, 1907.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 3 of the 12th instant, I have the honour to report that, although the Vali appeared quite reassured on the subject of Nejwa, I now learn privately that Izzet Pasha, the Military Commandant, has given orders to the Commander of the troops at Hassa to place soldiers with an officer on "Nejwa Island," where, it is supposed, the British have hoisted their flag. I hear this is in consequence of orders sent from Constantinople. The Vali being absent at Nasriyeh, I am unable to say what his Excellency thinks of this mistaken zeal on the part of his military colleague.

The Commander of the "Sphinx" informed me that Nejwa was a sand bank covered almost entirely with water at high tide.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. E. CROW.

[6808] No. 31.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 1.)

Sir, *India Office, February* 28, 1907.

IN reply to Sir E. Gorst's letter of the 16th instant, relative to the Memorandum communicated by the French Ambassador on the 8th November, 1906, relative to the Muscat Arbitration Award, I am directed to say that Mr. Morley concurs in Sir E. Grey's opinion that it would be desirable, before proceeding further, to endeavour to obtain an explicit statement as to the exact nature and scope of the French claim that Omanis in the service of French citizens are entitled under the Treaty of 1844 to fly the French flag.

I am also to say that Mr. Morley concurs in the terms of the communication which Sir E. Grey proposes to make to M. Cambon with this object.

Mr. Morley would, however, suggest, for Sir E. Grey's consideration, with reference to the inclosed copy of a telegram from the Viceroy of the 22nd instant, that it might possibly be desirable to indicate to the French Government the difficulties that would arise if, in consequence of their action in the matter, His Majesty's Government were to adopt a similar policy in respect of Omani employés of British Indian subjects resident in Muscat territory. It must, however, be remembered that we could not enforce these privileges for the latter without giving offence to His Highness the Sultan of Muscat.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure in No. 31.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P. *February* 22, 1907.

MUSCAT Award. My telegram dated the 20th ultimo.

It is pointed out by Resident in Persian Gulf that, if claim that right to fly flag is given by Article IV to employés of all Frenchmen in Oman is pressed by French, we could presumably argue, as regards Omani employés of several hundred British Indian subjects residing at Muscat, Sur, and other seaports, that in that case it would be open to us to claim the same privilege. This, he adds, would once more revive the whole evil, the abolition of which was the object of the arbitration.

[7043] No. 32.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 4.)

(No. 124.)

Sir, *Constantinople, February* 27, 1907.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 18 of the 5th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a Report by Mr. Consul Crow of the circumstances in which a British Indian sailing-vessel was plundered by pirates at Abul Khassib on the 18th January.

From a telegram from Mr. Crow, dated the 16th instant, I learn that the Vali of Bussorah had returned there on the 13th instant and was doing his best to capture the culprits, although the police were very deficient. Mr. Crow suggested that it would help his Excellency if I pressed for the employment of Turkish launches to patrol the river.

At my request Mr. Lamb brought the matter to the notice of the Grand Vizier, who caused a telegram to be sent to the Vali authorizing him to make any changes he thought desirable in the police force, and inviting him to report on the possibility of finding launches, or ordering them, if necessary, from India.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 32.

Consul Crow to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 8.)

Sir, *Bussorah, January* 30, 1907.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 5 of the 21st instant, and subsequent telegrams on the subject of the plundering of the British Indian sailing-vessel "Vitalpassa" by river pirates at Abul Khassib on the 18th instant, I have the honour to transmit a copy of the statement of the captain of the vessel reporting the occurrence. I have since learnt from His Majesty's Consul at Mohammerah that Khamissa Kherson, one of the crew, died in that port on the 26th instant from fever, aggravated by jumping into the river when the pirates boarded his ship. I reported his death to your Excellency in my telegram *en clair* to-day. As the Vali was absent at Nasriyeh, I requested the Acting Vali by letter on the 19th January to capture the pirates and recover the stolen property; and, hearing that no energetic measures had been taken, I called on him on Monday morning, the 21st January. The Mudir of Abul Khassib failed to report the outrage to the Bussorah authorities. At my request police and gendarmes were sent on Monday afternoon to the scene of the attack, and the Nakhoda attended at the Serai to give his evidence. In order to rouse the local authorities to a sense of their responsibility, I telegraphed to the Vali at Nasriyeh and urged his Excellency to press the pursuit of the pirates, and to obtain the co-operation of the Turkish naval authorities in the matter.

On the 29th instant, after receiving four telegrams from the Grand Vizier as well as telegraphic messages from the Sultan's Secretary and the Vali at Nasriyeh, the local authorities bestirred themselves and arrested seven men, natives of Chikur, a Turkish village near Abul Khassib, who were charged with plundering three houses in the neighbourhood on the night of the 18th instant. The local authorities seem to think

that these men also pirated the British vessel, but so far they have adduced no proofs of their complicity. The men arrested are six landed proprietors and a negro in their employ, and I am informed that they complained some time back of the malpractices of the police and dispatched a telegram to Constantinople detailing their grievances. As far as I can see at present it seems very unlikely that these men plundered the British vessel, and, from my experience of police methods in Bussorah, I am inclined to believe that they are mere scapegoats, against whom the police bear a grudge.

I have requested the local authorities to search the villages and to endeavour to recover some of the stolen property, especially the ship's papers. Failing the production of some such proof that the men arrested are the real culprits, I see no reason to trust the statement of the police that they have found the pirates. The gendarmerie force is very much below its full complement, and when the Vali returns I propose to ask him to keep their ranks better filled. A useful reform would be to establish several Carngol stations along the river bank between Bussorah and Fao, where sailing-vessels could moor at night for protection. The outrage occurred close to the Abul Khassib Custom-house, so close that the Nakhoda swam ashore to get assistance from the Coljis there. Of course none was given, and it would require a considerable force to repel the pirates if their numbers as stated by the captain of the vessel are correct.

I have, &c.

(Signed) F. E. CROW.

P.S. *February* 2, 1907.—I have just received your Excellency's telegram of the 2nd February. There is no evidence whatever that the persons arrested had anything to do with the piracy. All my information goes to show that they are the victims of private animosity, denounced by one Seyyed Hussein-el-Redeyin in revenge for accusing him of harbouring Maghil culprits, and disliked by the police because they signed a Mazbat to the Sultan's Secretary and Grand Vizier last May, complaining of extortion and ill-treatment. I think they have nothing to do with the case.

F. E. C.

Inclosure 2 in No. 32.

Statement of Nakhoda Joseph-bin-Mousa, Captain of the "Guja Vitalpassa," No. 2210 c, of Cutch.

LAST night about midnight, 7 o'clock Turkish time, a boat occupied by about twenty persons came alongside. Ten men from the boat boarded the vessel, each carrying a rifle. We were anchored in the river opposite Abul Khassib Custom-house, and at that time it was ebb tide. The robbers came from the stern of the vessel. On seeing them I and five other members of the crew threw ourselves overboard. The crew clung to the rudder of the vessel while I swam across to the custom-house and informed the Coljis there. The robbers remained on board about half an hour. They collected and took away all the clothing and cooking utensils of the crew, and also broke open my box and took the entire contents, my clothes, 100 rupees, and the ship's papers. I beg that the stolen property may be recovered and restored to me, and the robbers punished.

Bussorah, January 19, 1907.

[7044] No. 33.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 4.)

(No. 125.)

Sir, *Constantinople, February* 27, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from the British Vice-Consul at Alexandretta reporting on a serious mutiny of troops in that town. This incident is a striking instance of the spirit of insubordination which seems to be spreading in the Turkish Army.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 33.

Vice-Consul Catoni to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 2.)

Sir, *Alexandretta, February* 13, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to report that on the 9th instant the Mahsussch steamer "Marmara" landed at this port about 2,400 troops coming from the Yemen and discharged from active service. Yesterday morning the said troops presented themselves in a body to the Conak claiming food and their two years' wages, threatening openly to pillage the town if prompt satisfaction is not given to their claims.

As no funds were placed beforehand at the disposal of the local authorities of Alexandretta to meet this demand, the Civil Governor and the Military Commander of the town went together to the telegraph office to communicate with head-quarters on the subject. The troops followed them, and after having surrounded the telegraph office they warned them that they will not be allowed to leave the said office before receiving payment of their wages.

In fact, the Kaimakam of Alexandretta and the Liva, Sabbit Pasha, have been kept prisoners in the telegraph office until late in the night, when a telegram came from Constantinople informing them that orders have been transmitted to the Vali of Aleppo to send promptly to Alexandretta the necessary money to pay the wages of the aforesaid troops, which are now waiting here the execution of the Minister of War's orders.

If this fact has no other importance, it shows, however, the growing spirit of insubordination which now prevails among the Turkish troops.

I have, &c.

(Signed) A. CATONI.

[7045] No. 34.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 4.)

(No. 126)

Sir, *Constantinople, February* 26, 1907.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 66 of the 28th ultimo, forwarding a Report by Mr. Consul Devey on the state of the Damascus Vilayet during the December quarter, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of his reply to an inquiry which I addressed to him as to the action he might have taken to bring about some improvement in the situation.

Meanwhile I had instructed Mr. Lamb to call the attention of the Grand Vizier to the state of affairs described by Mr. Devey, and his Highness directed a telegram to be sent to the Vali, and a letter to be written to the Director-General of Posts, with a view to the removal of Riza Bey, of whose "open corruptness and villainy" Mr. Devey complained. His Highness promised further to inquire into the conduct of the other officials mentioned, and to act as might be necessary in regard to them.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 34.

Consul Devey to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 4.)

Sir, *Damascus, February* 7, 1907.

WITH reference to Mr. Tilley's despatch of the 28th ultimo, expressing your Excellency's wish to know whether I have remonstrated with the Vali on the condition of affairs in this vilayet during the last quarter, as narrated in my despatch No. 1 of the 2nd ultimo, I have the honour to report to your Excellency that I have done so on different occasions, the particulars of which are as follows:—

Towards the end of October, subsequent to the conflict between Druses and Bedouins, which was reported in my despatches No. 26 of the 12th October and No. 31 of the 12th November, I had an interview with the Vali, in which I pointed out to him the disorder occurring frequently in and around Damascus owing to the Moslems' excitement against Druses, and the result of this interview was that his Excellency gave strict orders to the Director of the Police and the Commandant of Gendarmerie to open their eyes in protecting the Druses of the neighbourhood against the ill-feeling of Damascus Moslems, and, further, he pushed on the projects which he was proposing for conciliating the Hauran Druses with Damascus traders, the result of which arrangement was rather satisfactory, as reported in my despatch No. 38 of the 10th December.

Again, towards the end of November I called the Vali's attention to the Mahommedan insolence in their dealings with the Europeans, and in support of my remark I quoted an incident in which the Rev. J. Segall, the pastor of the English Church here, was the sufferer, and at the same time I mentioned the threats pronounced by the Moslems of the Meidan quarter against the tramway project, as reported in my despatch No. 36 of the 5th December. His Excellency agreed with me on those points, and promised to punish the offenders and obtain redress for the offended in all cases of which he will be duly informed.

On the third time, about the middle of December, I called on the Vali and asked him to put an end to the disputes between Druses and Moslems in the Kaza of Kuneitra, and mentioned to him that the Moslem Chief, Assad-el-Assi, of Jubbathn, near Majd-el-Shems, is the chief intriguer and the principal promulgator of those seditious measures of forming a Mahommedan league directed against the Druses of Majd-el-Shems. The result of this interview was that the Vali summoned the leaders of both parties to Damascus, and put the whole matter in the hands of a Committee, which studied the causes of dispute and concluded terms of conciliation. The leaders returned to their respective villages apparently reconciled.

I may add here that about a month ago, subsequent to an interview which I had with the Greek Orthodox Patriarch, in which his Beatitude informed me of the pitiless persecutions and frequent exactions displayed by the Atrash Chiefs of the Jebel against the Christians living among the Druses of the Hauran, I put the whole matter briefly before the Vali, and asked him to take some measures for the better protection of those helpless Christians in the Jebel. Unfortunately, his Excellency has not, so far, done anything for the realization of the hopes of the Patriarch, or in execution of his promises to me.

I discussed from time to time the matter with my French, Italian, and Austrian colleagues, who were in full accord with me on the state of things, and on more than one occasion severally expressed their opinions, and remonstrated with the Vali, while the Italian Vice-Consul went so far as to write to his Excellency a very severe letter on the subject.

At present things are rather calmer than before, owing partly to the cold weather, partly to the withdrawal of Bedouins to the desert in the south-east, as they always do in winter, and partly, perhaps, to the fact that the Vali has begun to feel that his duties in this vilayet, with so many antagonistic elements, are different to those which he discharged in Rhodes and at the Privy Council in Constantinople.

I have, &c.

(Signed) G. P. DEVEY.

[7883] No. 35.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 11.)

(No. 130.)

Sir, *Constantinople, February* 27, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a very interesting despatch from Mr. Shipley, His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, dealing with the unrest prevailing in that district, and the rising spirit of opposition to the Government among the Mussulmans.

Mr. Shipley depicts the general situation very much as it appears to me from reports which I have received from other quarters.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 35.

Consul Shipley to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 5. Confidential.)

Sir, *Erzeroum, February* 15, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency that, although matters at Erzeroum—which, in my telegram to Mr. Barclay of the 28th ultimo, I reported as again wearing an unsettled aspect—have since then, outwardly at least, become somewhat quieter, there is no real improvement in the situation. There is, it is true, for the moment, no sign of an intention on the part of the Mussulmans to renew their demonstration of last year, but the dissatisfaction to which I have alluded in my previous despatches on the subject has, if anything, increased rather than diminished, and I can hardly afford your Excellency a better proof of the intensity of the desire for a change in the present methods of administration by which all classes seem to be permeated than that there are evidences to show that what was originally a simple outburst of popular feeling against the general mismanagement of affairs has gradually taken the shape of a definite organization for purposes of opposition to the Government. This organization, which consists, I am told, of certain representatives taken from each of the Mussulman wards of the city, appears at present to confine its activities to holding meetings from time to time at which, if my information be correct, not only the various questions which from time to time arise between the people and the Administration are fully discussed, but also the question as to what their attitude should be in case active measures should be decided upon by the Government with regard to the events of the 23rd October last. That the Erzeroum Mussulmans themselves will venture upon a general rising would seem to be extremely improbable in view of their isolated position, although vague rumours are in circulation to the effect that something, it is not specified what, is to take place some time in the Greek month of March next, and that the Mussulmans of this vilayet will no longer be found to be alone. But it is significant that the revolutionary documents and pamphlets printed, I believe, in Europe, find their way here, and are eagerly read and discussed, while, though I am unable to furnish your Excellency with exact proofs, there is little doubt but that active correspondence in a revolutionary sense is being carried on with the disaffected Mussulmans in other parts of the Empire.

I have already alluded to the desire for reform which has taken hold of all classes, but it is noteworthy that in all the seditious utterances which have been brought to my knowledge, expressions of disloyalty to the reigning dynasty, as such, or of a wish for a change in that direction, are entirely wanting. As far as I myself have been able to gather, the resentment of the people is chiefly directed against certain officials at Constantinople, whom they regard as thoroughly corrupt and inefficient, and to whose self-seeking they attribute the general state of impoverishment into which their country has fallen. It is time, they are saying, that obedience to the laws should be enforced, and that those who abuse their position for personal profit should be punished, no matter how high their station, and though no definite plan seems to have been formed as to how this is to be brought about, the increasingly frequent references made by the more educated among them as to what has taken place in the neighbouring countries of Russia and Persia tend to show in what direction they are inclined to consider a remedy may be found.

In my despatch No. 12, of the 15th June last, I had the honour to point out to your Excellency that a very serious factor in the then situation was that the troops, both officers and men, had become infected with the prevailing disaffection, and that the Mussulmans had acquired the dangerous conviction that under no circumstances would they be fired upon by the former. This conviction, I need hardly say, has been in no way diminished by the events of the 23rd October, when it was a common remark that the soldiers openly fraternised with the people while the latter, as reported in my telegram of the 28th ultimo above referred to, have received further encouragement to persist in their attitude of opposition through the failure of the Government to take any apparent notice of the murder of its officials, whether this failure be due, as interpreted by the Mussulmans, to weakness at head-quarters, or to doubts as to the loyalty of the troops. Under these circumstances the present Governor-General, Nouri Bey, appears, as did his predecessor Ata Bey, inclined to adopt a temporising policy, and to avoid as far as possible giving any reasonable cause of complaint to the population. No power of initiative would, however, as yet appear to have been conferred upon him, while the respect for his office has been seriously undermined, and as

occasions for conflict can hardly, in the present temper of the Mussulmans, fail to arise between himself and the latter, I can only again express the opinion to your Excellency that serious consequences may ensue unless some definite plan of dealing with the situation is at length decided upon by the Government.

I should add that although in view of their defenceless position it is, of course, not possible for the Christians of Erzeroum to contemplate a further outbreak of disturbance without a certain amount of alarm, there continues to be on the whole a remarkable absence not only of panic but even of uneasiness on their part. This I attribute to a certain extent to the respect shown by Mussulmans for private persons and property to which I have alluded in my despatch No. 25 of the 27th October last, and still more to the fact that no attempt is being made by the latter to involve the Christians in or to fasten upon them any of the responsibility for their proceedings. I am unfortunately unable to give your Excellency an equally good account of the relations between the Christians and Mussulmans in other parts of the vilayet. As is to be expected matters are worst in the districts immediately adjoining the neighbouring Province of Bitlis and the Dersim, where cases of oppression and extortion practised by the Kurds on the Armenian population are becoming increasingly frequent, and for which the latter can obtain practically no redress. Even in the Plain of Erzeroum itself, where until recently the state of affairs might on the whole be said to be comparatively satisfactory, a state of lawlessness, taking chiefly the form of abduction or attempted abduction of Christian girls by Turks, is beginning to prevail. I have made representations to the Governor-General on the matter, and in one case, viz., that of alleged forcible abduction of two Christian girls by certain Turks in the Terdjan district, a Commission consisting of the Acting Gregorian Bishop of Erzeroum has been sent to hold an inquiry into the affair on the spot, the result of which I shall not fail to report to your Excellency.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

[7890] No. 36.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 11.)

(No. 141.)

Sir, *Constantinople, March* 3, 1907.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 130 of the 27th ultimo, inclosing copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum dealing with the unrest prevailing in that district and the growing dissatisfaction of the Mohammedan population with the present régime, I have the honour to inform you that Mr. Shipley has reported by telegram another incident which occurred quite recently at Erzeroum, and fully bears out his views as to the situation in that city.

It would appear that a Mussulman was arrested a few nights ago by the Vali on the charge of being implicated in the distribution of revolutionary publications. Although the Vali seems to have taken steps to assure the Mufti and other leading Mussulmans that the arrest of this man was absolutely necessary, Mr. Shipley has been informed that the gates of the town are being watched to prevent the deportation of the prisoner, and the jailers have been warned that, should anything happen to him, the consequences will be very serious to themselves.

This attitude of passive resistance on the part of the Mohammedan population to the orders of the Central Government is the more important in view of the evident fear of the local authorities to resort to repressive measures or to run counter to the movement.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

[6808] No. 37.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir, *Foreign Office, March* 12, 1907.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 28th ultimo, relative to the right, under the Treaty of 1844, of Omanis in the service of French citizens to fly the French flag.

I am to state, in reply, that Sir E. Grey will bear in mind the suggestion of Mr. Secretary Morley, contained in the last paragraph of your letter, that it would be desirable to indicate to the French Government the difficulties that would arise if, in consequence of their action in the matter, His Majesty's Government were to adopt a similar policy in respect of Omani employés of British Indian subjects resident in Muscat territory. Sir E. Grey is, however, of opinion that, before acting on this proposal, it would be preferable to await the reply of the French Government to the communication which His Majesty's Government are about to make to them through the French Ambassador at this Court, and the note to M. Cambon, in the terms of which Mr. Morley has now concurred, will therefore be sent in as it stands.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GORST.

[3539] No. 38.

Memorandum communicated to M. Cambon, March 13, 1907.

HIS Majesty's Government are giving their careful consideration to the Memorandum which the French Ambassador was good enough to communicate to them on the 5th November, 1906, relative to the application of the Arbitral Award of the 22nd August, 1905, on the question of the Muscat dhows.

In this connection the attention of Sir E. Grey has been particularly drawn to the paragraph in M. Cambon's communication relative to the grant of the French flag under the Treaty of 1844 to subjects of the Sultan of Muscat in French service, which runs as follows:—

"Au surplus, le Gouvernement de la République maintient son droit, consacré et reconnu par le Traité de 1844, d'accorder notre pavillon aux Mascatais au service de Français résidant dans l'Oman, droit dont l'exercice pourrait, dans certaines éventualités, porter le nombre des boutres naviguant sous pavillon Français, au-dessus du chiffre de la liste de M. Laronce."

Sir Edward would be greatly obliged if M. Cambon would explain more precisely the nature and scope of the reservation which the French Government desire to make on this point, as it is difficult to see in what manner Omani subjects who are the owners or masters of dhows could, in that capacity, be in the French service and entitled to the privileges accorded by Article IV of the Treaty of 1844, and the passages in the Award dealing with Omanis in the service of Frenchmen would seem to show that the same view was taken by the Arbitrators.

Foreign Office, March 13, 1907.

[8574] No. 39.

The Earl of Cromer to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 23.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Cairo, March* 16, 1907.

FOLLOWING sent to Constantinople:—

"Coptic Convent at Jerusalem.

"It is reported by the Coptic Bishop of Jerusalem that the Abyssians are desirous of reopening this question, and that they are being supported by the Italians. A more or less satisfactory settlement of this tiresome question was brought about some time ago, and I hope that you will do your best, should an opportunity arise, to prevent its being reopened."

[9600] No. 40.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 25.)

(No. 169.)
Sir, *Constantinople, March* 18, 1907.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 141 of the 3rd March, I have the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Erzoroum giving an account of the circumstances of the arrest by the Erzoroum authorities of a Mussulman, named Zidki Effendi, on a charge of being concerned in the distribution of revolutionary documents.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 40.

Consul Shipley to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 10.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, March* 5, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency that the name of the individual whose arrest by the Governor-General, Nouri Bey, on a charge of being concerned in the distribution of revolutionary publications formed the subject of my telegram to your Excellency of yesterday's date, is Zidki Effendi, a resident of this town engaged in the transport business. The arrest in question, which was effected in the night of the 27th ultimo was, it appears, due to information having been given to the Erzoroum authorities by the Governor-General of Van of the discovery at that town of a quantity of seditious documents hidden in certain bales of merchandize, of which Zidki Effendi was the forwarder. The arrest, I may add, was followed up by a perquisition at the latter's house, but with what results has not yet transpired.

The immediate effect, however, of the step above referred to was that on the day following some four or five of the lower class of Mussulman citizens, acting evidently under the orders of the revolutionary organization, proceeded to the Government buildings and, I am told, boldly demanded of the Vali why Zidki Effendi had been arrested. I am unable to state the exact nature of the reply with which Nouri Bey dismissed his visitors, but if the report which I have received of the proceedings at a meeting on the following day, Friday, to which the Mufti, several Ulema, and certain of the leading Notables were summoned by his Excellency be correct, the latter, after a strong remonstrance as to the unseemliness of the demand made by the deputation above referred to, pointed out to them that as proofs had been furnished to him of Zidki Effendi's being actively engaged in a seditious movement against the Imperial Government the necessity of his arrest could not be contested by any loyal subject of His Imperial Majesty.

The remarks made by his Excellency would appear to have had a certain effect, for the arrest of Zidki Effendi has so far not been followed up by further trouble in the shape of a demonstration or other disturbance. None the less, as reported to your Excellency in my telegram above referred to, a very sharp look-out is being kept at the various exits of the town with a view of preventing his deportation; while the warnings given to the jailers of the prison in which he is confined as to the consequences to themselves should anything happen to him while under their charge can hardly be considered as mere empty threats, in view of the fate of the police officials on the 23rd October last.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

[9608] No. 41.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 25.)

(No. 177. Confidential.)
Sir, *Constantinople, March* 18, 1907.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 130 of the 27th ultimo, I have the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, reporting the

observations made to him by the Vali of Erzeroum relative to an attempt by Russian Armenian revolutionaries to enter into an understanding with certain Kurdish Chiefs.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 41.

Consul Shipley to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 12. Confidential.)

Sir, *Erzeroum, March 7, 1907.*

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency the following observations made to me by the Governor-General of Erzeroum, Nouri Bey, during a recent interview which I had with him, and which, in view of the present unsettled nature of the situation, may possibly not be without a certain interest.

His Excellency in the course of the conversation remarked to me that it was not from the purely Turkish part of the population, but from the Turkish Hamidié regiments, that he apprehended trouble in the coming spring. The former he felt he was able to control—a statement which he repeated more than once during the interview—but he had no means of effectively checking the excesses of the latter, owing to the fact that the privileges which had been conferred upon them as soldiers had rendered them practically independent of the civil authority. They were, it was true, amenable to martial law, but this, he said, constituted no restraint whatever, as he was well aware that no one in the districts inhabited by these regiments would venture to give adverse evidence in a case in which one of their number was the defendant. Further– but this his Excellency begged me to regard as entirely between ourselves—it had come to his knowledge from a letter which had been intercepted, from the Armenian revolutionaries in Russia to certain of the Chiefs of these Hamidié regiments, that efforts were being made to tamper with their allegiance to the Imperial Government. The letter in question, though somewhat vague, contained statements to the effect that it was well known that they, the Hamidié regiments, would be allowed to subsist only during the lifetime of the present Sultan, whose health was notoriously indifferent. Let them therefore look to themselves and do as they thought fit, which, his Excellency said, could only be interpreted as an overture to them to throw in their lot with the Armenians. He had further been made aware that the local Armenian Committee of Erzeroum had also been sounded by the central organization in Russia, but had declined all participation in such a scheme, the first consequences of which, as they were well aware, would be—I give the expression made use of by his Excellency – their own annihilation.

In reporting to your Excellency the above, I am, of course, not in a position to vouch for the authenticity of the sources of Nouri Bey's information; and as regards the local Armenian Committee mentioned by the latter, I feel bound to point out to your Excellency that, though such an organization may well be in existence, no outward manifestation of activity on its part has been brought to my knowledge during the period of my residence in Erzeroum. The assertion further made by his Excellency as to his ability to control the Turkish part of the population is, whether well founded or not, singularly at variance with the attitude maintained by the latter. On the other hand, taking into account the prevailing uncertainty of affairs to which I have alluded above, it would hardly be a matter of surprise that an attempt, such as that referred to by his Excellency, should have been made by the Russian Armenian revolutionaries to enter into an understanding with certain of the Kurdish Chiefs, the general opinion entertained with regard to the latter being, I find, that no reliance could be placed on their loyalty in time of need, and that their action in that event would be dictated solely by motives of personal interest.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

[9716]

No. 42.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 25.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley

forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a despatch dated the 15th March, and inclosures, to the Government of India, relative to the alleged complicity of the steamers of the British India Steam Navigation Company in the Persian Gulf arms traffic.

India Office, March 25, 1907.

Inclosure 1 in No. 42.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

(Secret.)

My Lord, *India Office, March 15, 1907.*

WITH reference to the papers inclosed with your Foreign Secretary's letter dated the 31st January last, I forward, for the information of your Excellency's Government, copy of correspondence between this Office and the British India Steam Navigation Company on the subject of the allegations that have at various times been made as to the complicity of that Company's steamers in the illicit arms traffic in the Persian Gulf.

I have, &c.
(Signed) JOHN MORLEY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 42.

India Office to British India Steam Navigation Company.

Sir, *India Office, February 21, 1907.*

THE attention of the Secretary of State for India has been drawn to allegations that a considerable amount of smuggling of arms to Bahrein and Koweit is carried on by means of the ships of the British India Steam Navigation Company.

I am to refer especially to the case of the "Chindwara" at Muscat in January 1904. According to other information, the number of arms landed at Koweit by the Company's steamers is estimated at some 5,000 rifles per annum. In October last information reached His Majesty's Consul-General, Bushire, through Persian official sources, to the effect that it appeared that for some time past the traffic in arms had been surreptitiously carried on between Muscat and Bahrein; that professional arms-runners were shipping the arms in the British India steamers under false denominations; and that from Bahrein the arms were gradually filtered into Persia by means of native craft.

The British India Steam Navigation Company are no doubt aware that the export of arms from Muscat to India or to Persia is forbidden by the Sultan, at the instance of the British Government, who have undertaken to enforce this prohibition so far as it is in their power to do so.

Similarly proclamations have been issued by the Sheikhs of Bahrein and Koweit against both the importation and the exportation of arms into and from their territories, which His Majesty's Government intend to enforce in so far as they are enabled to do so by the law as defined in the case of Fracis Times *v.* Carr.

The Secretary of State feels sure that any smuggling of arms which may have taken place in the steamers of the British India Steam Navigation Company must have been not only unknown to the Company themselves, but absolutely opposed to their wishes, and he now brings the matter before them only because he is confident that they will desire to make inquiry into the matter, and to take any measures which may be found possible for the prevention of the practices alleged to exist.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure 3 in No. 42.

British India Steam Navigation Company to India Office.

Sir, 9, *Throgmorton Avenue, London, February 27, 1907.*

I AM instructed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 21st instant, with reference to the allegation that a considerable amount of smuggling of arms to

Bahrein and Koweit is carried on by means of the ships of the British India Steam Navigation Company.

The Directors of the British India Company request you to convey to the Secretary of State their thanks for the courteous manner in which this matter has been brought to their notice, and to say that they will gladly do everything possible to prevent such practices as are alleged. They have already telegraphed to the managing agents of the Company in India to institute inquiries into the allegations, and to caution the Commanders of steamers employed in the Persian Gulf, and instruct them to report at once to the Consuls any suspicious cases.

The Directors express the hope that these efforts will be successful in preventing any trafficking in arms in these quarters so far as the Company's steamers are concerned.

I am, &c.
(Signed) P. W. ARMOUR, *Secretary.*

Inclosure 4 in No. 42.

India Office to British India Steam Navigation Company.

Sir, *India Office, March* 8, 1907.

I AM directed by the Secretary of State for India to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 27th February last regarding the position of the British India Steam Navigation Company towards the arms traffic in the Persian Gulf.

Mr. Morley desires to express his appreciation of the prompt action taken by your Company in investigating the matter, and of the readiness they have displayed to co-operate in the important task of checking this illicit trade.

A copy of this correspondence is being forwarded to the Government of India for their information.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[9799] No. 43.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 26.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of inclosures in a letter from the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated the 31st January, relative to Pan-Islamism in Muscat.

India Office, March 25, 1907.

Inclosure 1 in No. 43.

Major Grey to Government of India.

(Confidential.) *Muscat, December* 24, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith, for your information, a copy of a letter dated the 24th December, 1906, and its inclosures, which I have addressed to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Bushire.

Inclosure 2 in No. 43.

Major Grey to Major Cox.

(Confidential.) *Muscat, December* 24, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to refer to this Office letter dated the 8th October, 1906, and its inclosure, and to state that, in my opinion, the conclusion arrived at by Lieutenant Shakespear in connection with Pan-Islamism in Oman is generally correct. It is well,

however, to give some account of such efforts as have been made recently to induce the Omani Sultan and people to accept the views of the propagandists.

2. In a recent communication I alluded to the fact that attention was being paid by those fostering the Pan-Islamic movement to the desirability of increasing the natural dislike by every Moslem potentate to Christian interference in his affairs, with a view to binding these Rulers together under the Turkish standard, and I append an extract from the "Nibras-ul-Musharikah wal Mugharibah" ("Lamp of the Eastern and Western Peoples"), a publication edited in Cairo by Saiyid Qasim-bin-Said-as Shamakhi Al'Amari and Saiyid Mustapha-bin-Ismail Al'Amri-al-Faridhi of that city, and said to be issued bi-weekly. The number from which this extract was taken contains two or three inflammatory addresses supposed to have been delivered at an imaginary Pan-Islamic Conference, followed by a few words of exhortation to each Moslem Ruler of any importance, urging them to resist Christian interference, looking to Turkey for assistance. The attached (Inclosure 3), addressed to His Highness the Sultan of Oman, is a fair specimen of these latter compositions, among which there is naturally considerable resemblance.

3. A few copies of this issue of the "Nibras" found their way into Oman some months ago, but none have been seen now for some time. Their contents have produced little or no effect in the direction desired by the editors, even among the Mutawiah or religious body. The reason for this is stated in the attached description of the Mutawiah (Inclosure 4).

4. A copy of this letter and its inclosures has been forwarded to the Government of India in the Foreign Department.

Inclosure 3 in No. 43.

Extract from the "Nibras-ul-Musharikah waal Mugharibah," addressed to His Highness the Sultan of Muscat.

YOUR Highness is renowned for perspicuity, knowledge, and good works; you have inherited the distinction of an ancient and honourable lineage; you come of Rulers noted for nobility of race and deeds. You have seen and read of the distresses endured by Moslems in both Eastern and Western countries, the reasons of which are their discord and dissension and lack of mutual assistance, while the foreigners cleverly arrange their tricks and put them in circulation, destroying Moslem authority. You should study carefully the contents of this paper and consider them with acute perception, sound deliberation, and shrewd intelligence. Your Highness is looked upon by our Supreme Lord Abdul Hamid-bin-Abdul Majid as the most eminent Chief among those of the peninsula (Arabia); it is your duty to propagate these views among the people of your province, as well as among your neighbours the Chiefs of the minor States, such as Lahej, Mukalla, Shihar, Riyadh, &c. You may add your own scholarly remarks, so that every Chief may see that his independence is a holy right which should be untouched; these Chiefs being unable by themselves (*i.e.*, without assistance) to retain their independence and to keep up their power and dignity before the enemy who is prepared to attack them either at present or in future, except by the means provided by the religion in the manner stated (*i.e.*, joint effort); that is an old Mahommedan law by which the Islam and its followers stand firm, and their light shines clearly on the standard of the crescent. Similarly the reverse (*i.e.*, not banding together) is a clear heresy and an evident deviation (from religion). God says, "And God is not (disposed) to lead a people into error after directing them until that which they ought to avoid is become known unto them." God has taken upon himself to explain this matter in the verse quoted; it does not therefore become a man of honour to prefer error and discord to concord, agreement, and (mutual) succour.

Inclosure 4 in No. 43.

"Mutawiah Sect of Oman."

THE word Mutawiah مطاوعة (singular مطوع) is derived from the Arabic طاعة Thaat, obedience. It appears to have been employed first in a religious sense by the Wahabis, whose founder applied it to certain of his followers who,

besides being distinguished for devotion to the cause, had some claim to religious earning. The modern sect of Mutawwas in Oman, whose title was probably taken from the Wahabi adaptation of the word, bears much the same relation to the Ibadhi اباضي sect (which is a branch of the Khawarij خوارج or Seceders of the time of 'Ali) as the Sufis do to the Orthodox Sunnis. They first came into prominence under the leadership of Said-bin-Khalfan-al-Khalili in the time of 'Azzan-bin-Qais, about 1870.

The principal object of the Mutawwa movement is the establishment of an Imam as successor to the Khalifs recognized by Ibadhis, and they desire to ordain among Moslems besides the ordinary religious duties—

1. Prohibition of smoking tobacco and punishment of those who smoke.
2. Nikah marriage in all cases.
3. Increased care and regularity in regard to the veiling of women.

A true Mutawwa must hold, moreover, that 'Ali was a Kafir, and no Moslem.

The sect is at present lead by Sheikh Isa-bin-Saleh-al-Haritthi, and the principal 'Ulamas are Abdullah-bin-Hamad-as Salimi and Muhammad-bin-Shaikhan-as-Salimi. These all reside in the Sharkiya, but Muhammad-bin-Shaikhan is at present in Muscat. He declined to interview me, but is quite friendly with my drugoman, whom he gave to understand that no amount of effort on the part of Pan-Islamists would induce the Mutawwas to abandon their own ideas of succession to the Khalifate.

(Signed) W. G. GREY, *Major.*

Inclosure 5 in No. 43.

Major Cox to Government of India.

(Confidential.)

Bushire, December 30, 1906.

WITH reference to letter dated the 24th December, 1906, from the Political Agent, Muscat, to my address, a copy of which was simultaneously forwarded by him to Government, I have the honour to forward a copy of Lieutenant Shakespear's letter, dated the 8th October, 1906, with inclosure.

A report was asked for by me in pursuance of a request from Mr. J. G. Lorimer, C.I.E., in charge of the "Gulf Gazetteer."

Inclosure 6 in No. 43.

Lieutenant Shakespear to Major Cox.

Muscat, October 8, 1906.

IN connection with previous correspondence regarding the Pan-Islamic movement in Eastern countries, I have the honour to forward herewith a Memorandum on the subject as far as it affects Muscat.

Inclosure 7 in No. 43.

Memorandum on the Pan-Islamic Movement in Muscat.

THOUGH much has lately appeared in the Arabic press of Egypt (of which copies certainly reach Muscat) regarding Pan-Islamism, there is no reason to suppose that any active efforts are being made in Muscat to forward this movement.

I have casually discussed the subject with His Highness the Sultan, who simply ridiculed the idea that any such propaganda could be successfully engineered among his ignorant and bigoted subjects, at least for a long time to come, especially as the furtherance of any such idea as that the Sultan of Turkey was the head of all Islam would seriously affect his own independence and present position.

I have also talked over the matter with one of the enlightened men here most likely to take any interest in the subject, and a regular reader of the Cairo papers,

Sayid Yusuf Zowavi; he also told me that no such movement had any present existence in Muscat, nor was likely to ever gain any footing, as the Sultan here represented practically all power, both spiritual and temporal, as far as the majority, who are quite illiterate and very ignorant, were concerned.

No emissaries from Turkey or Egypt have yet, as far as it has been possible to ascertain, visited Muscat, and my own opinion is that the subject has no interest for the people in Muscat at present.

In spite of Sayid Yusuf's conversation, I cannot help thinking, however, that the only man likely to further the idea here is Sayid Yusuf himself. He is about to go on the Haj Pilgrimage, and after it to visit Egypt and Asiatic Turkey; on his return his opinions may repay curiosity and inquiry.

(Signed) W. H. I. SHAKESPEAR, *Lieutenant,*
Officiating Political Agent, Muscat.

October 7, 1906.

[9800] No. 44.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 26.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of inclosures in a letter from the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated the 7th February, relative to Pan-Islamic propaganda in Muscat.

It is requested that these inclosures, which are sent in original, may be returned to this Office when done with.

India Office, March 25, 1907.

Inclosure 1 in No. 44.

Major Grey to Government of India.

(Confidential.)

Sir, *Muscat, January 21, 1907.*

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith, for your information, a copy of a letter dated the 21st January, 1907, which I have addressed to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Bushire.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. G. GREY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 44.

Major Grey to Major Cox.

(Confidential.)

Sir, *Muscat, January 21, 1907.*

I HAVE the honour to refer to my letter No. 589, dated the 24th December last, and its inclosures.

2. I have been informed by Sheikh Saif-bin-'Ali-bin-'Amir-al-Maskari of Ibri in the Sharqiyah, who is himself a Mutawwa, that letters had recently been received from Cairo by Sheikh Isa and Sheikh Abdullah-as-Salimi, through Sheikh Zaid-bin-Khalifah of Abu Dhabi, begging for pecuniary help in the reproduction of the "Nibras,"* which had collapsed temporarily for want of funds; and suggesting that they should send a few representatives of the Pan-Islamists of Oman for introduction to the Sultan of Turkey. The persons addressed have not replied, and they have no intention of sending either money or men.

3. The letters referred to were written by one of the editors of the "Nibras," Saiyid Mustafa-bin-Ismail-al-Faridhi. I am told that this man, who, as regards religion, has seceded from the Sunni to the Ibadhi sect, belongs to the Sadat tribe, a remnant of the Koraish, who are supposed to be the descendants of Muhammad (Saiyids).

* A Pan-Islamic journal published in Cairo.

A small number of the Sadat are to be found in Dhufar, and one or two elsewhere in Oman territory.

4. A copy of this letter has been forwarded to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, Calcutta.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. G. GREY.

[10468] No. 45.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 2.)

(No. 190.)
Sir, *Constantinople, March 25, 1907.*

WITH reference to my despatches No. 130 of the 27th ultimo and No. 169 of the 18th instant, respecting the political situation at Erzeroum, I have the honour to report that, according to telegrams received from His Majesty's Consul, the Vali summoned fifty of the leading Mussulmans to his house on the 15th instant, and read to them a message from the Sultan to the effect that the Decree for the exile of all persons prescribed in connection with the disorders of March 1906, had been rescinded and a general amnesty granted for the events of the 23rd October (see Mr. Barclay's despatch No. 718 of the 26th October). The poll tax, however, must be paid, as no distinction could be made in favour of Erzeroum, although the arrears of the last two years would be remitted. The Vali, after urging that the tax would, after all, chiefly affect a few rich persons, contented himself with expressing the hope that the inhabitants would now address a telegram of thanks to His Imperial Majesty announcing their submission to his will, and so set a good example to other vilayets.

Mr. Shipley has been told that the Vali's message was received in silence, his audience merely asking for time to consult their fellow citizens.

The population gave no sign of approval of the message. On the contrary, on the following day a large but perfectly orderly deputation of Mussulmans waited on the Vali, and after stating that they were too poor to pay the taxes in question, begged him to procure their remission from the Sultan. The Vali promised to forward this petition and let them know the result.

On the 21st instant he announced that the tax on domestic cattle was reduced from 10 to 3 piastres per head, but this Concession had no better success than the other, the people still protesting their inability to pay.

To-day the Turkish papers announce that, as a further proof of His Majesty's benevolent regard for the welfare of his subjects, an Imperial Iradé has been issued and communicated to the proper departments, ordaining that both the poll tax and the tax on domestic animals shall be abolished.

I need hardly emphasize the importance of this striking defeat of the Government by their Mussulman compatriots.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

[11063] No. 46.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 8.)

(No. 194.)
Sir, *Constantinople, April 1, 1907.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 126 of the 27th February, I have the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Damascus, on the subject of the situation in the Jebel Druse.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 46.

Consul Devey to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 11.)
Sir, *Damascus, March 15, 1907.*

WITH reference to a paragraph in my despatch No. 4 of the 7th ultimo, I have the honour to submit the following information about the present state of the Christians living in the Jebel Druse, and respecting that disturbed part of this vilayet.

Out of the 127 villages of the Jebel there are only seven villages inhabited by Christians alone, and fifteen others containing certain proportions of them, amounting in all to about 5,000 souls, of whom two-thirds are Greek Orthodox and the remaining third Greek Catholics.

The number of Druses in their 120 villages is approximately put at 60,000 souls, one-third of which carry arms, and more than the half of these are armed with Martini rifles, smuggled to them mostly from Beirout port, and carried over to the Hauran by Beirout and Lebanon traders, who make very high profits on those contraband articles. The gunpowder with which they fill up the cartridges is manufactured mostly in the Lebanon; they themselves have already learned how to manufacture it, and are now producing some inferior quality of it.

There are also several Bedouin tribes tenting among the Druses and avowing permanent devotion to them. They are known by the name of "Arab-el-Jebel" (Bedouins of the Mountain); their number is put at about 40,000 souls, and they can put into the field about 10,000 men. They are the allies of the Druses, and are ready to support their views in defensive and offensive engagements.

The Governmental administration in the Jebel is conducted by three Kaïmakams situated at Sweida, Salkhad, and Ahira, which are the centres of the three Druse kazas, while there are besides these about fifteen Druse villages in the Moslem Kaza of Busr-el-Harir. These three Druse kazas, since the year 1896, used to be governed by military officers of the rank of major, serving as Kaïmakams of those kazas, but under the present circumstances these officers resigned their posts on the ground of the intolerable insolence and open disobedience of the Druses, and other officials of inferior ranks are now placed in charge of the kazas.

The Judicial Department does not exist in the three Druse kazas; only a Court was organized at Sweida in the year 1897 and abolished in 1901.

The military garrisons in the Jebel consist in one battalion confined in the fine barracks of Sweida, one company at Ahira, and another company at Salkhad. These forces are never called to action, because they are too weak to cope with any emergency in their respective places, and their presence among the Druses has no authoritative weight whatever.

The gendarmerie consists in only six infantry and twenty cavalry in each of the three kazas, and these, again, are not adding much to the prestige of the Government.

The three kazas of the Jebel contribute to the Government treasury £T. 4,620 annually, divided as follows: Tithes, £T. 2,000; virgo, £T. 2,000; military exemption tax, £T. 400; and public instruction, £T. 220. The population of these kazas pay this sum with great difficulty, and in many cases with heavy reductions, so that those revenues are scarcely enough to cover the local expenditure of the Government.

As to the treatment of the Christians by that strong element of their Druse countrymen, I am sorry to report that it is by no means just or tolerable. The Druse Sheikhs or Chiefs constantly force the helpless Christians who happen to be in their respective circles of influence to plough their fields, transport their crops, and do their work without any pay; they impose on them and levy taxes that vary with the income and profession of each Christian individual; in many cases they force the father to pay them 7*l.* on the occasion of the marriage of his daughter, a very humiliating and vexatious old habit still exercised by many of those Sheikhs; and, worst of all, when these poor creatures raise their voices and complain to the authorities, their Druse oppressors take hold of their property and deny them the right of living among them, so that some of those Christian peasants were obliged to emigrate and seek residence somewhere else. The most notorious oppressors of the Druse Chiefs are Salim Atrash, with the Christians of the villages of Tissa, Sumj, and Simmakiyat; Mustapha Atrash, with the Christians of Metan; Yahya Atrash, with those of Ira, Kharaba, and Jubeib; Hammoud Atrash, with those of Isliha; Thaukan Atrash, with Kureiya Christians; and Khalil Amir, with those of El-Heet. Other Druses expelled Christians and

Moslems from the village of Shannira, near Salkhad, and appropriated their land. Minor oppressors do not fail to make their appearance among the Christians whenever they find pretexts to do so.

The Greek Orthodox Patriarch here tried his best with the local authorities to secure better treatment for his community, but his proceedings for this end were fruitless. His Beatitude applied to me more than once to support him if possible, and, besides speaking to the Vali on the subject, I had a long interview with some of the Druse Sheikhs of the Jebel, in which I advised them to be on better terms with their inoffensive Christian neighbours, and showed them the displeasing results of oppression and atrocious treatment. I learned soon after that this interview had its effect, and the Chiefs among the Druses, in a general meeting, decided to exert their influence for the protection and better treatment of their Christian countrymen.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. P. DEVEY.

[11790] No. 47.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received April 13.)

Sir, *India Office, April 12, 1907.*

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to transmit herewith, for submission to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, copy of a Secret letter from the Government of India regarding the desire of a Sheikh named Jaman-bin-Mahomed, who represents himself to be a leading Ameer of Zahran, in the district of Al Tayaf in the Hedjaz, to place himself and his country under the protection of the British Government, or in default of such protection to obtain assistance in bringing his grievances to the notice of the Sultan through the British Ambassador at Constantinople.

It will be observed that the Sheikh who is now at Aden has been informed by the Political Resident that, while he would make his desire known to His Majesty's Government, it was not probable that they would accede to his request.

Subject to the concurrence of Sir E. Grey, Mr. Morley proposes to approve the suggestion of the Government of India that the Political Resident at Aden should be empowered to inform the Sheikh orally to the effect that, as friendly relations exist between the British Government and the Sultan of Turkey, within whose territory the Sheikh lives, t he British Government are unable either to take him and his people under protection, or to intervene on his behalf through the Ambassador at Constantinople.

It will be seen that the Government of India request to be favoured with a reply by telegram to their despatch.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 47.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Secret.)

Sir, *Fort William, March 14, 1907.*

WE have the honour to forward for your consideration, a copy of a letter addressed by the Political Resident at Aden to the Government of Bombay, regarding the desire of a Sheikh, named Jaman-bin-Mahomed, who represents himself to be a leading Ameer of Zahran in the district of Al Tayaf in the Hedjaz, to place himself and his country under the protection of the British Government, or, in default of such protection, to obtain our assistance in bringing his grievances to the notice of the Sultan through the British Ambassador at Constantinople.

2. The matter is not one that directly concerns the Government of India, but we would suggest, subject to any views that may be held by His Majesty's Government in the matter, that as the Sheikh is at Aden the Political Resident should be empowered to reply orally to him to the effect that, as friendly relations exist between the British Government and the Sultan of Turkey, within whose territory the Sheikh lives, the British Government are unable either to take himself and his people under protection or to intervene on his behalf through the Ambassador at Constantinople.

The Political Resident might also be told that if the Sheikh, on learning this decision, expresses a wish to be allowed to reside permanently at Aden, his request should be referred to the Government of India for orders with such recommendation as the Resident may desire to make.

3. We would request that we may, if possible, be favoured with a reply by telegram to this despatch.

We have, &c.
(Signed) MINTO.
KITCHENER.
H. ERLE RICHARDS.
E. N. BAKER.
C. H. SCOTT.
H. ADAMSON.
J. F. FINLAY.
J. O. MILLER.

Inclosure 2 in No. 47.

Major-General De Brath to Government of Bombay.

(Confidential.) *Aden Residency, January 13, 1907.*

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of Government, that a certain Sheikh named Jaman-bin-Mahomed, who represents himself to be a leading Ameer of Zahran, in the district of Al Tayaf, has recently visited Aden with a letter of introduction from the Abdali Sultan, whom he first visited upon his arrival from Hodeida.

2. In the course of an interview which I granted to him yesterday, the Ameer claimed the chiefship over a considerable district in the Hedjaz, extending inland from the village of Zahran which is situated near Jeddah on the shore of the Red Sea. And it transpired that in the course of certain hostilities which took place between this tribe and a considerable Turkish force about two years ago, some success had attended his arms, and a considerable treasure had been captured from the Turkish force sent against him. The Ameer declared that these hostilities were the result of Turkish oppression and general misrule, and after relating various endeavours to secure reform and redress, in the course of which he had visited Constantinople in the hope of thus placing his grievances before the Sultan of Turkey, he expressed a desire to now place himself and his country under the general protection of the British Government. His country, he added, was now in disorder and he had refused to listen to various advances made to him by Turkish authority for the restoration of order, and of the treasure which he had succeeded in capturing.

3. Upon my explaining to him that friendly relations subsisted between the Government of Great Britain and the Sultan of Turkey which precluded the possibility of complying with such a request, he begged that the British Government would at least intervene on his behalf, and take the necessary measures to bring his grievances to the notice of the Sultan through the British Ambassador at Constantinople. It was against Turkish authority in the Hedjaz and Yemen that he desired to complain. To the Sultan himself he was loyal, but he could no longer tolerate the general corruption and oppression of the local officials.

4. Meanwhile, he threw himself and his family upon the hospitality of the British Government, and he asked that facilities might be afforded to him to now take up his residence at Aden.

5. I replied to the Ameer that while it was not probable that Government would accede to his request I would inform them of it and him of the reply accorded. Meanwhile, I consented to treat him hospitably until he could make his own arrangements for the accommodation of his family.

6. I accordingly have the honour to request that I may be informed of the reply which Government desire that I should give to this Chief. In appearance he is a man of some status and refinement, and the two young sons by whom he was accompanied were boys of exceptionally well-bred and handsome appearance.

[11956] No. 48.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 15.)

(No. 206.)

Sir, *Constantinople, April 5, 1907.*

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 106 of the 26th ultimo, calling for a report on the condition of the Moush and Bitlis districts.

The Vice-Consul at Bitlis is at this moment temporarily in charge of a Dragoman, but I hope shortly to be able to send a member of the Consular Service there, and, in the meantime, I have instructed His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum to furnish me with a report on the condition of affairs, with special reference to the statements made by the Armenian Federation Committee.

With regard to the forcible conversion of Armenian girls to the Moslem faith, the Fédération Arménienne may be referring to a case which recently occurred at Pekaritch, in the Terdjan district, when two girls were abducted and married to Mussulman husbands.

The circumstances were carefully inquired into by a Commission sent by the Vali of Erzeroum, and consisting of Mahmond Bey, the Head of the Census Department, and Der Nerses, the Gregorian Bishop.

The conduct of the Commission appears to have given satisfaction to the Armenian inhabitants, and, although the girls were not returned at the time, the villagers apparently did not wish to press this point, particularly, perhaps, as one of the girls was, according to Der Nerses himself, content to remain with her husband, and there was hope of the other being recovered later on.

With regard to the general question of the persecution of Armenians, I have the honour to transmit copies of two despatches which I have just received through His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum from the Dragoman in charge at Bitlis, but it must be borne in mind that this officer is himself an Armenian.

The second of his despatches refers to a case in which several Kurdish families took up their abode last summer in a small Armenian village, and endeavoured to squeeze out the Armenian families, but, owing to the representations of the Acting British Vice-Consul, were ejected.

I propose to instruct the officer, who is sent this spring to take charge of the Vice-Consulate, to pay early attention to this matter.

I may add that the Mutessarif of Moush, Khoussef Bey, was recently dismissed in consequence of the discovery of defalcations in connection with the Budget of the Sanjak.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 48.

Mr. A. Yafrastian to Consul Shipley.

Sir, *Bitlis, February 16, 1907.*

I HAVE the honour to report that oppressions are going on in the Kazas of Akhlat and Boulanik in this hard season.

In consequence of a small encounter between two Kurdish Aghas, in Perkhus, in Akhlat, Seyaré gendarmes were sent out to keep order in the Kaza. Their subsistence is provided by Armenians, every village being called upon to contribute 500 piastres; and the Seyarés squeezed out by horrible tortures the money required. At the same time twenty sheep were stolen from Gedzvag and some oxen from Garmoundj by Kurds; the gendarmes had been informed of these robberies, but none of them had moved to pursue the robbers.

The nephew of the Kaïmakam of Akhlat is collecting the cattle-tax, once collected already, while the Government tax-gatherers have been selling the cows and grains of villagers. In view of their extreme poverty and wretchedness, whole villages of Boulanik intend to emigrate to Russia, as there are rumours that both Russian and Turkish Governments have consented to the emigration of Armenians.

I have, &c.
(Signed) ARSHAG Y. YAFRASTIAN,
Dragoman.

Inclosure 2 in No. 48.

Mr. A. Yafrastian to Consul Shipley.

Sir, *Bitlis, February 16, 1907.*

WITH reference to Mr. Geary's despatch of the 24th July, 1906, I have the honour to report that the ejected Kurdish families have come back again to settle themselves in Hurmuz.

It is true, in that time the intruding Kurds were removed in consequence of the strong representations made by Mr. Geary, and the Vali confirmed the fact; but all those families in question were allowed to come back gradually to Hurmuz, where they are settled now, apparently in a final way.

I have, &c.
(Signed) ARSHAG Y. YAFRASTIAN,
Dragoman.

[11790] No. 49.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir, *Foreign Office, April 16, 1907.*

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 12th instant, relative to the desire of Sheikh Jaman-bin Mahomed to place himself and his country under British protection, or to obtain the aid of His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople in bringing his case to the notice of the Sultan.

In reply, I am to state that Sir E. Grey entirely concurs in the reply which Mr. Morley proposes to return to the Sheikh, as set forth in the third section of your letter.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GORST.

[12562] No. 50.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received April 19.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copies of inclosures in a letter from the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated the 14th March, relative to the desire of Messrs. Wonckhaus and Co. to erect a flag-staff on their house in Bahrein.

India Office, April 18, 1907.

Inclosure 1 in No. 50.

Government of India to Major Cox.

Sir, *Fort William, March 11, 1907.*

I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 10th February, 1907, reporting that Messrs. Wonckhaus and Co. have moved again in the matter of a flag-staff.

2. You suggest that you should be authorized to advise the Sheikh of Bahrein, as the most convenient means of meeting these requests for permission to fly Company flags or erect signalling flag-staffs, that he should intimate to the agents for the two or three Shipping Companies whose vessels regularly visit this port that they are at liberty to hoist signals on the yards of his flag-staff.

3. In reply, I am to say that as, according to the report furnished by the Political Agent, Bahrein, advice in the terms suggested by you has already been tendered to, and not accepted by, the Sheikh of Bahrein, the Government of India see no present advantage in repeating it, and would prefer to leave the matter to be dealt with, so far as is possible, by the Sheikh at his discretion. In the event, however, of Messrs. Wonckhaus taking action as indicated in the concluding sentence of Captain Prideaux' letter to your address, the case should again be reported for orders.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. E. HOLLAND,
Assistant Secretary to the Government of India.

Inclosure 2 in No. 50.

Major Cox to Government of India.

Bushire, February 10, 1907.

WITH reference to the correspondence commencing with my letter dated the 1st September, 1906, I have the honour to submit, for the information of Government, a copy of a communication received from the Political Agent, Bahrein, in which he reports that Messrs. Wonckhaus and Co., have moved again in the matter of a flag-staff.

Sheikh Esa has recently (in June last) erected a fine flag-staff on the sea-front, which is central and shows up well from the sea, and if the Government of India see no objection, I would suggest that they should authorize me to advise him, as the most convenient means of meeting these requests for permission to fly Company flags or erect signalling flag-staffs, to intimate to the agents for the two or three Shipping Companies whose vessels regularly visit his port that they are at liberty to hoist signals on the yards of his flag-staff when their ships are in harbour.

This was the course recommended to Sheikh Esa in the present case by Captain Prideaux, and I see no objection to it.

Inclosure 3 in No. 50.

Captain Prideaux to Major Cox.

Bahrein, January 26, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to report that on the 12th instant Messrs. R. Wonckhaus and Co., of Bahrein, addressed me, expressing a wish to erect a flag-staff on the roof of their house for the purpose of flying the Hamburg-American Line's flag when their steamers were in the harbour and of communicating by signal flags. They requested me to communicate this wish to the Chief of Bahrein and to obtain the latter's sanction to the scheme.

2. As the signalling side of the question had not been previously raised, I forwarded a copy of the firm's letter to the Chief, and expressed a hope in my letter that some facilities might be given to the firm for signalling, even if the Steamer Company's agents were not allowed to erect their own flag-staff. At the same time, I suggested in a verbal message, which my interpreter conveyed to the Chief, that it might perhaps be possible for the firm, under certain conditions, to be allowed the use, for signalling purposes, of the Sheikh's own flag-staff, which stands immediately outside their house at some 40 yards distance away.

3. The Chief at first seemed inclined to fall in with this suggestion, but in his official reply he wrote that the firm should do their signalling "without an erected flag-staff" and made no allusion to my proposal.

Subsequently I made another reference to him on the subject, upon which he wrote that he felt that compliance would be derogatory to his position "in the eyes of the Rulers of the world."

4. I have informed Messrs. Wonckhaus that they are welcome to the use of my flag-staff if ever need arises for signalling, as the "British India" and "Bombay-Persian" Steam Navigation Companies occasionally are allowed to make use of it;

but in consequence of the distance at which their office is situated from this Agency, I suspect that they will prefer to raise a small mast temporarily whenever they require to exchange signals with their vessels, in the hope that the Chief will acquiesce in this procedure.

[12809] No. 51.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 22.)

(No. 225.)

Sir, *Constantinople, April* 16, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copies of two despatches from His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum respecting the discontent prevailing among the Armenian inhabitants of the vilayet, owing to the burden which they allege is inflicted on them by the tax for exemption from military service.

After reading Mr. Shipley's second despatch I cannot think that their grievance on this score is a very serious one, as the tax, although higher than it formerly was, only amounts to 50 piastres (or about 8*s.* 4*d.*) a-year, and, as the Vali pointed out in conversation with Mr. Shipley, this cannot be considered unduly heavy when compared with the long duration of the period of military service imposed on Mussulmans.

The question is not, therefore, in my opinion, one in which intervention on the part of His Majesty's Embassy is necessary.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 51.

Consul Shipley to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 9. Confidential.)

Sir, *Erzeroum, March* 2, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency that during the past week a deputation representing the Armenian Gregorian inhabitants situated in the Erzeroum plain, of which the chief were Tifandj, Arshuni, and Dinakom, numbering in all about 2,200 souls, presented a Petition to the Russian Consulate-General in this town expressing their wish to become Russian subjects, alleging as a reason the general wretchedness of their condition, the uncontrolled licence of the gendarmes and other tax-collecting agents of the Government, and the exactions and oppressions of all kinds practised upon them, against which all their complaints had proved ineffectual.

As was to be expected, the immediate result of this step on the part of the villagers was the arrest by the Government of two or three of the members of the deputation above referred to—an incident which led to some little friction between the Governor-General, Nouri Bey, and my Russian colleague, M. de Scribine. The latter, in the course of a conversation which he had with me on the above subject, stated that he felt that he had some reason to complain of the attitude taken up by the Vali in this matter, as, on being informed of the Petition which had been presented, he had immediately sought an interview with his Excellency and had furnished the latter with the fullest explanations, adding that he had himself given no interview to the members of the deputation, and had caused it to be made known to them that it was out of the question that such application could be entertained by him. I should add that, on further representations being made by M. de Scribine to Nouri Bey, the prisoners in question have since been released, with the explanation that their arrest was not owing to the fact that they had had recourse to a Consulate, but to the necessity of ascertaining whether the demand of the villagers was due to any real grievance on their part or was the work of certain instigators.

As far as anything definite has as yet transpired respecting the above movement, the determination of the villagers to seek Russian protection would, as on a former somewhat similar occasion reported to your Excellency by Mr. Lamb in his despatch No. 2 of the 24th February, 1900 (when the demand, however, then was for reception into the Orthodox Church), appear to be due chiefly to a hope on their part of thereby escaping the burden of taxation from which they are suffering, more especially as the

Government, through an alleged misapprehension of its instructions on the part of its agents, was credited by the villagers with the intention of exacting at once and in full the amount—in many cases very considerable—of the arrears of the taxes for exemption from military service. On the other hand, while, in view of the statements contained in the concluding part of my own Report to your Excellency (No. 5 of the 15th February last), it will, I think, be denied by no one that the Christians have very legitimate grounds of complaint against the licence which certain Mussulmans—and especially the gendarmes and other tax-collecting agents of the Government—were beginning to allow themselves with regard to the womenfolk of the former, the fact has nevertheless to be pointed out that from the particular villages in question no specific case of outrage had been brought to the notice of any of the foreign Consulates in Erzeroum, while the information which had recently been received by me had rather tended to show that, in consequence of the measures taken by the Government—particularly with regard to the Pokaritch case—a better feeling between the two nationalities was beginning to prevail. Under these circumstances, and bearing in mind the remarks made by Mr. Lamb in his despatch to your Excellency No. 5 of the 7th March of the above-mentioned year with reference to the action attributed to Colonel Prjevalsky, the then Military Attaché to the Russian Consulate-General in this town, with regard to the demand above referred to of reception of certain Armenian villages into the Orthodox Church, the Turkish authorities can hardly be blamed if, as I have good grounds for believing was the case, doubts were entertained by them as to whether the idea of obtaining foreign protection originated with the villagers themselves or was suggested to them from outside.

I should mention that the deputation did not present itself at this Consulate, my dragoman reporting to me that on being approached by them on the matter he had informed them that, while they were, of course, free to act as they thought fit, he had no doubt that an application of the kind referred to would not be entertained by me A somewhat similar course was, I unders and, taken by my French colleague, M. de Peraldi.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 51.

Consul Shipley to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 15. Confidential.)

Sir, *Erzeroum, March* 30, 1907.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 9 of the 2nd instant, on the subject of the Petition presented by certain Armenian villages in the Erzeroum plain to the Russian Consulate-General in this town with the view of acquiring Russian nationality, I have the honour to report to your Excellency that two Armenian villagers from another part of the vilayet, viz., the Pasen district, recently presented themselves at this Consulate and inquired whether it was possible for them to become British subjects. I at once, of course, made it clear to them that this was out of the question, but as they appeared to be peasants of a very respectable type I invited them to state to me the reasons of their desire to change their nationality, and, after some little questioning, I elicited from them the fact that in their case it was the tax for exemption from military service which formed their chief ground of complaint. The elder of the two, who acted as spokesman, asserted that, whereas, some twenty years ago he had only paid 25 piastres, 53 piastres was now being demanded of him. Moreover, while formerly the tax in question was not payable until the age of 18, the full amount was now exacted on all male children alike notwithstanding the assurances which, he maintained, had been given to them by the officials charged with the duty of taking the census last year. The interview closed by their stating in reply to a further question of mine that, as far as their own village was concerned, they did not complain of any special ill-treatment, it was the increasing burden of taxation from which they sought relief.

As the Governor-General, Nouri Bey, had on several occasions intimated to me his readiness to listen to any representations I might have to make touching the general interests of the province, I ventured to bring to his notice the statements of the two villagers above referred to as far as they related to the question of taxation,

adding that I did so with the more confidence as the villagers themselves had put their case in a most temperate manner, and had made no exaggerated complaints against the administration. His Excellency, who listened very attentively to such observations as I had to make, was good enough in reply to enter, at some length, into the whole question of the incidence and method of perception of the tax complained of. The amount payable, he said, was formerly a trifle over 38 piastres per annum, and not 25 piastres as stated by the villagers. Some four years ago in consequence, he believed, of a report of a Commission appointed to inquire into the subject the amount was raised to 50 piastres; this augmentation, if he recollected rightly, being due to the opinion of the Commissioners that tax as it stood, viz., 38 piastres, was not in proportion to the long duration of the period of military service imposed upon the Mussulmans, and the burdens thereby entailed on the latter. Further, with certain exemptions such as those of persons belonging to the professional classes, of persons of extreme age, and of such as were physically unable to work, the tax, whatever its amount, had always been payable by all males alike. It was on the number of these latter that the assessment of any particular village was made, the quota to be contributed by each family being left to the villagers themselves. The tax and defective method, however, in which the assessment had been carried out in the past, had, his Excellency stated, led to serious loss on the part of the Government while perpetual dissensions arose among the villagers themselves owing to the efforts, principally on the part of the richer among them, to evade the payment of their due share. As an instance of the loss incurred by the Government, his Excellency mentioned that, apart entirely from the question of arrears, the census taken last year had revealed the fact that in certain villages there were numbers of Christians who had not been placed on the lists at all thus reducing, to the detriment, of course, of the Exchequer, the amount at which such villages ought properly to have been assessed. As regards the incidence of the tax his Excellency said that he was doing what he could to aid the villagers to arrive at a more equitable system by inducing them through their clergy and elders to elect respectable persons on the Assessment Committee, and he was not without hopes that his efforts in this direction might lead to a better state of things, one cause of grievance to which I have already alluded in my despatch above referred to, viz, that payment of arrears was to be exacted at once and in full, he had, he trusted, done away with to a great extent by causing the taxation officials, to whose incapacity to understand his plain instructions the original misunderstanding was due, to inform the villagers that this was not the case, and that part only of the arrears would be called in at intervals of four years. His Excellency finally remarked with regard to the question of those villages where many names, as above stated, had not been placed on the assessment lists at all that, in view of the insuperable difficulties which would attend any attempt on the part of the Government to recoup themselves for the loss thus sustained, it would in his opinion be the more statesmanlike proceeding to write it off altogether as a bad debt and this was the course which he had strongly recommended to the Porte.

I have reproduced to the best of my ability the above observations of the Governor-General as there can be no doubt that, as reported in my despatch No 9, above referred to, it is this question of taxation which was one of the chief contributory causes of the demand of the villayers to change their nationality. For the explanation given to me by his Excellency, though it testifies to the sincere desire of the latter to consider as far as possible the interests of the former, leaves untouched the fact that the tax in question has in recent years been augmented by nearly one-third, while there is no evidence to show that the paying power of the Christians has increased in like proportion. As far, indeed, as the Mussulmans are concerned it has been their main argument during the past year that, where as fresh taxation was constantly being imposed, the prosperity of the vilayet, and consequently their own had been steadily diminishing. It is further to be noted that the inhabitants of any given village are collectively responsible for the amount at which they may be assessed and that those who remain have to make good the deficiencies of absentees. But, however legitimate the Christians may consider their grievance in this respect to be, the expedient adopted by them, whether suggested from the outside or not, of calling attention to it was, I cannot help thinking, a most questionable one. As your Excellency will have been made aware by my recent reports affairs generally in the vilayet were at the time in a critical condition, and the demand made by the former to transfer in a body their allegiance from the Sultan to a foreign Power, regarded as it was in some quarters as a possible attempt to resuscitate in an active

form the Armenian question, might easily have led to serious consequences. That it did not do so is, I believe, to be attributed to the prudence and conciliatory disposition shown by the Governor-General, and to the steadfastness of purpose of the Mussulmans themselves whose interest it was to stand well with the Christians as a community, and not to allow the introduction of a side issue until their own dispute with the Government should have been settled.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

[12819] No. 52.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 22.)

(No. 235.)

Sir, *Constantinople, April 17, 1907.*

I HAVE the honour to report that a project has been on foot for some years past for the Concession to a French Syndicate of a line of railway from Panderma, on the Sea of Marmora, to Soma, passing by Bali-Kessir, the total length being about 300 kilom.

A short time ago a well-known British merchant here, Mr. Henry Baker, was summoned to the Palace and told that if he would form an International Syndicate the Concession would be given to him. Mr. Baker thereupon asked me for a letter of introduction to the French Ambassador, alleging that he thought he would have more chance of success if he joined forces with the Frenchman, M. Bellet, who had, with the support of the Embassy, been for several years looking after the Concession, and who is stated to have some influential support in Paris, his principal backer being M. Tavernier. The idea is to build the railway without any kilometric guarantee, and I believe on this account, as well as for other reasons, the project is viewed with disfavour by the Anatolian and Smyrna-Cassaba Railway Companies.

M. Constans was good enough to receive Mr. Baker and to give him to understand that personally he had no objection to the railway being intrusted to an Anglo-French group, promising at the same time to speak to the Sultan on the subject. Mr. Baker subsequently heard that the Sultan's answer was not altogether satisfactory, and that the Ambassador regarded it as expressing His Majesty's desire not to pledge himself to M. Constans at the present moment.

The railway traverses a rich and populous country, but I hope to procure shortly for Mr. Baker information which will afford any British group the means of judging of the capabilities of the project before undertaking further study and examination.

The advantages to British interests of obtaining a Concession of this kind are obvious, not only as offering a new field for railway construction in Turkey, but as indirectly influencing our position as regards the Bagdad Railway, whilst at the same time affording advantages to British industry for placing in this country a large stock of railway material, it being, of course, understood that our participation with the French would secure to England half the orders.

Should Mr. Baker succeed—either alone or in conjunction with the French—in getting the Concession, he will endeavour to raise the capital in London, and in this case it is probable that application may be made to the Foreign Office for information on the subject. I think it well therefore to make these preliminary remarks in the hope that the Foreign Office will encourage British financiers connected with railways at all events to inquire into the merits of this business.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

[13380] No. 53.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 26.)

(No. 238.)

Sir, *Constantinople, April 22, 1907.*

IN continuation of previous correspondence respecting negotiations for a concession to British capitalists of the oil-fields of Mesopotamia, I have the honour to report the following facts which I have learned by telegram from the Acting British Consul-General at Bagdad, and of which I think it would be well that Mr. D'Arcy or his agent, Mr. Nichols, should be informed.

A German named Dr. Hugo Grothe, who is, he says, a geographer and ethnographist, has recently arrived at Bagdad from Mosul, but the British Consular Agent at the latter place reports that he is a member of the German Board of Trade, and that he has written to a German firm to send out an engineer with oil pumps. Dr. Grothe proposes to leave the Tigris at a point above Amarah and visit Dizful, Koremabad, and Burujird.

I communicated the substance of this message to His Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin yesterday, with a view to obtaining any information about Dr. Grothe of which Sir F. Lascelles may be in possession.

Mr. Nichols, after some weeks' fruitless negotiations with the Civil List during which, at times, he thought that he was within reach of an acceptable understanding, considered that, in view of the difficulty of bringing the negotiations to a successful issue, he required more extensive powers from his Syndicate. He therefore left for London on the 16th instant in order to confer with Mr. D'Arcy.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

[13705] No. 54.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 29.)

(No. 244.)

Sir, *Constantinople, April 24, 1907.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul-General at Beirut, reporting on the state of affairs in that city.

On receipt of this despatch I instructed Mr. Lamb to represent to the Grand Vizier that, while our Consular Reports testified to the energy lately displayed by the Vali, Khalil Pasha, during the recent disturbances, there was still a good deal of uneasiness among foreigners, and that it was most desirable that his Highness should strongly support the Vali and appoint an energetic Superintendent of Police.

His Highness replied that he was fully acquainted with the condition of affairs at Beirut, and admitted that he had not always supported the views and representations of Khalil Pasha, since it was impossible not to hold his Excellency in large measure responsible for the disturbances and uneasiness which had occurred, owing to his mismanagement of affairs and discreditable dissensions with Mozaffer Pasha. These dissensions had given rise to acute party feeling and agitation against both Governors.

Nevertheless, the Grand Vizier continued, the Porte recognized the necessity of strengthening both the gendarmerie and the police, and a small Commission had just been formed under the Presidency of Arif Hikmet Pasha, the Sultan's son-in-law, for the purpose of studying the question.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 54.

Consul-General Sir R. Drummond-Hay to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 25.)

Sir, *Beirut, April 1, 1907.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 19 of the 21st March, I have the honour to report that with the exception of the assassination lately of a Christian by a Moslem in the market-place of this town, the two communities are in general peacefully disposed, and there are no fears of a conflict between them, as has been reported in the Egyptian newspapers. The Vali has taken every possible measure to restore order, but he cannot cope with the present state of things unless the Government complies with his repeated demands for the reinforcement of his gendarmerie and police. I understand that his Excellency has applied also in vain to Constantinople for the appointment of an energetic Superintendent of Police, and for authority to publicly execute some of the assassins belonging to both creeds, as already mentioned in my previous reports. The Grand Vizier paid no heed to Khalil Pasha's demands, and merely telegraphed for

explanations as to the alleged preponderance of the French language in his administrative departments, and directing him to allow the use only of Turkish and Arabic. The Vali replied that no other languages but the two latter were employed, and the officials acquainted with French were in a very small minority. After the receipt of this message, his Excellency decided to appeal direct to the Sultan, to whom he sent a cyphered telegram on the 25th ultimo tendering his resignation, as the Grand Vizier had turned a deaf ear to all his demands for the maintenance of order during a critical state of the town, and was seeking instead to cause him unnecessary annoyance. On the 28th ultimo Khalil Pasha received a favourable answer from His Majesty, who ordered him to specify the demands which had not been granted by the Grand Vizier. My French colleague, M. Campana, is also in possession of this information, and has, I believe, written in the same sense to his Embassy. He is equally anxious, with myself, that Khalil Pasha should receive every possible support from his Government for the introduction of the necessary measures to insure the tranquility of this town.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. HAY DRUMMOND-HAY.

[13843] No. 55.

M. Cambon to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 29.)

L'AMBASSADEUR de France a l'honneur d'adresser ci-joint à son Excellence le Principal Secrétaire d'État des Affaires Étrangères un Mémorandum relatif à la question des boutres Mascatais.

M. Cambon saisit cette occasion de renouveler à Sir Edward Grey les assurances de sa haute considération.

Ambassade de France, Londres,
le 26 Avril, 1907.

Inclosure in No. 55.

Memorandum.

PAR une note du 13 Mars dernier, le Principal Secrétaire d'État des Affaires Étrangères a bien voulu demander des explications sur le sens d'un passage du Mémorandum remis par M. Cambon le 5 Novembre dernier au sujet de l'application de la sentence arbitrale du 22 Août, 1905, concernant les boutres Mascatais. Ce passage était ainsi conçu :—

"Au surplus, le Gouvernement de la République maintient son droit, consacré, et reconnu par le Traité de 1844, d'accorder notre pavillon aux Mascatais au service de Français résidant dans l'Oman, droit dont l'exercice pourrait, dans certaines éventualités, porter le nombre des boutres naviguant sous pavillon Français, au-dessus du chiffre de la liste de M. Laronce."

L'Ambassadeur de France a l'honneur de faire savoir à son Excellence Sir Edward Grey que, dans sa pensée, le sens de cette phrase est le suivant : Le Gouvernement Français entend qu'un Français résidant à Mascate et propriétaire de boutres aura le droit de les faire naviguer sous pavillon Français, même s'ils ne sont montés que par des indigènes à son service ; mais il ne prétend pas accorder à l'avenir à des indigènes Mascatais, fussent-ils au service d'un Français, l'autorisation d'arborer le pavillon Français sur des boutres qui seraient leur propriété personnelle.

M. Cambon se plaît à espérer que cette explication écartera toute difficulté et que l'accord pourra s'établir entre les deux Gouvernements sur les bases indiquées dans son Mémorandum du 5 Novembre.

Ambassade de France, Londres,
le 26 Avril, 1907.

[14630] No. 55*.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 6.)

(No. 257.)

Sir, *Constantinople, April 30, 1907.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 198 of the 1st instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith copies of two despatches from His Majesty's Consul at Damascus respecting affairs in the Nejd.

In the first of these despatches Mr. Devey gives a new version of the circumstances in which Mut'ib-er-Rashid was murdered, and relates a ghastly tale of treachery.

In the second despatch he gives an account of the relations between Ibn Sooud and the new Emir of Hail. It appears that Ibn Sooud replied to Sultan Ibn Rashid's offer of friendship by an intolerable list of conditions, and that as a result Sultan Ibn Rashid has raised a very considerable force with which to attack Ibn Sooud. No fighting has yet taken place, but Mr. Devey anticipates that it will end in favour of Ibn Sooud.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 55*.

Consul Devey to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 16.)

Sir, *Damascus, April 8, 1907.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 9 of the 22nd February last, respecting the murder of Mut'ib-er-Rashid, and the succession of his cousin, Sultan Ibn-Hamoud-er-Rashid, I have the honour to report to your Excellency that the version given there as to the murder of Mut'ib by Telal-er-Rashid, having Sultan as its author, appears now, in the face of a new report that reached me on a very good authority, to be erroneous and a falsehood created by the actual murderer.

The plot against the life of Mut'ib and his brothers was organized by Sultan in the following way :—

First of all, Sultan persuaded Mut'ib to send his mother (sister of Sultan) to Mecca for the Hajj, and to escort her with a large number of his most faithful servants and attendants, including Ikab, the bravest and most daring of the body-guards of Mut'ib, and Abdur-Rahman, the wisest and most devoted of his advisers. Securing the success of this first step by which Mut'ib was deprived of his best men, Sultan proposed to him an ibex shooting party far away from Hail, to which proposition Mut'ib innocently agreed. The members of the party were Mut'ib, his two brothers, Mashaal and Mahommed, and his cousin Telal on one side, and Sultan, his two brothers, Sooud and Feissal, and his cousin Dhari on the other, with a big number of servants and attendants. After they lunched at a certain fountain in the open country Sultan suggested that the eight of them would go ahead and leave their followers at lunch. Mut'ib accepted the suggestion, and the above-mentioned eight Chiefs rode together side by side. When they were at a distance far enough from the camp, Sultan and his brothers and cousin, in execution of their plot, rode alongside of the others, and at a signal from Sultan shot them dead. Sultan killed Mut'ib, Sooud killed Mashaal, Feissal killed Mahommed, and Dhari killed Telal. They rode back to the camp and told that Telal killed Mut'ib and his brothers, and that they, the murderers, avenged for their death and killed Telal. Consequently Sultan was proclaimed Emir of Shammer at the camp and marched back to Hail triumphantly. He broke the news to the whole tribe and to the neighbouring Chiefs, and finally to the Turkish authorities at Medina, Damascus, and Constantinople, in the same form as stated in despatch under reference.

Hamoud-er-Rashid, the father of Sultan, was greatly displeased by the cruelty of his son towards his grandsons, and in mark of his disapproval of those atrocities he left Hail and started to Medina, where he arrived yesterday to spend the remaining days of his life there. He telegraphed his arrival at Medina to one of his friends here.

I have, &c.

(Signed) G. P. DEVEY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 55*.

Consul Devey to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 18.)

Sir, *Damascus, April* 15, 1907.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 16 of the 8th instant, I have the honour to submit to your Excellency the following report on the actual relations between Sultan Ibn Rashid and Abdul Aziz-ibn-Sooud, of the Nejd, with the events that took place since the succession of the former to the Principality of Jebel Shammer at Hail :—

When Sultan became the master of Hail, he wrote to Ibn Sooud, who was then at Bureideh of Kassim, telling him of the events which led to his succession, and asking him to recognize that change, proposing at the same time friendly relations between Hail and Riadh. Ibn Sooud replied that he would be glad to maintain the good relations, and accept the friendliness offered, on the following conditions :—

1. The members of Abul Kheil family, of Bureideh, rival of Ibn Sooud, now refugees at Hail, should be expelled from that town.
2. The 30 swords and 300 Martini rifles taken from Ibn Sooud's men by Mohammed Ibn Rashid twenty years ago should be returned.
3. The two cannon at Hail given by the Turkish Government must be handed over to Ibn Sooud.
4. The Muteir tribe, which frequently annoys Ibn Sooud by its raids against his partisans, should be fought by Ibn Rashid.
5. Ibn Rashid should not communicate or conclude Treaties with any people beyond Jebel Shammer except through Ibn Sooud.
6. Ibn Rashid would not be allowed to march with a standard of his own unless authorized by Ibn Sooud to do so.
7. The expenses of the recent mobilizations at Kassim, amounting to £ T. 5,000, incurred by Ibn Sooud for an expedition against Mut'ib, the late Prince, should be paid by Ibn Rashid.

Certainly Ibn Rashid refused to agree to these hard terms, and marched out from Hail with 4,000 cavalry and about 15,000 camel riders to meet Ibn Sooud, who was at the head of a considerable force coming from Kassim to Hail in support of his demands. Seeing that his forces were inferior to those of his rival, Ibn Sooud, who never anticipated that Sultan Ibn Rashid, the murderer of his cousins, the usurper of their posts, and the newly-proclaimed Prince, would be able to have such a large force under him, at once retired and recrossed the path back to Kassim, where he is now calling his various allies for his help.

Sultan Ibn Rashid is at the present moment camping at a place called Kehefa, one day's journey from the frontier of Kassim, and, as soon as the mobilizations of Ibn Sooud are complete, probably an action will take place between the two rival Princes, the issue of which will be, with probability, in favour of the latter.

I have, &c.

(Signed) G. P. DEVEY.

[14635] No. 56.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 6.)

(No. 262.)

Sir, *Constantinople, May* 1, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to report that, according to a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Damascus, the rails of the Hejaz line are now laid as far as the 755th kilometre from Damascus to a point a little beyond Akhdar, and the earthworks are nearly complete for 100 kilom. more.

The Government are also beginning work at the Medina end, 1,320 kilom. from Damascus, and while the Haj was there in March the ceremonies of inauguration were held. Two battalions of troops have, Mr. Dever says, already begun the earthworks there, and the line from Akhdar viâ Medaini-Saleh to Medina has been studied.

Mr. Loiso, the British Vice-Consul at Mersina, hears that the soldiers working near Medina have been attacked by Bedouins and obliged to withdraw, leaving the line to be destroyed, and that the authorities are trying to buy the Bedouins off.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

[13843] No. 57.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir, *Foreign Office, May* 8, 1907.

WITH reference to the letter from this Office of the 12th March last relative to the Muscat Arbitration Award, I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit to you, to be laid before Mr. Secretary Morley, a copy of a Memorandum which has been received from the French Ambassador,* in reply to Sir E. Grey's communication of the 13th March last, of which a copy was sent to your Department in the letter from this Office of the 16th February last.

It will be seen that, in M. Cambon's opinion, the meaning of the sentence in question is that the French Government hold that a French citizen residing at Muscat and owning dhows will have the right to sail them under the French flag, even if they are manned solely by natives in his employ; but they do not claim to be able to authorize in the future native Omanis, even if in the service of a Frenchman, to fly the French flag on dhows which they may own as private property.

It appears to Sir E. Grey that, if it is made clear that this interpretation is formally adopted by the French Government, it may be accepted as satisfactory, but he would be glad to receive any observations which Mr. Morley may have to offer on the subject.

I am, &c.

(Signed) L. MALLET.

[15541] No. 58.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 13.)

(No. 270.)

Sir, *Constantinople, May* 7, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to report that I have received a telegram from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, according to which a band of Armenian revolutionaries had been pursued into that vilayet from Bitlis, and had taken refuge in the monastery of Akhtomar. The Vali of Van, on hearing of this, sent a battalion of infantry and two cannon to the spot, and they surrounded the Armenians, who opened fire on the troops.

Captain Dickson, on hearing the news, proceeded to the spot, and, in a second telegram which I have just received, informs me that the Armenians had escaped, but that the monastery was bombarded and pillaged by the troops and two harmless people

* See No. 55.

killed. The Vali declares that the monastery was pillaged by the Armenians, but owing to Captain Dickson's representations he has promised to have the stolen property recovered.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

[15545] No. 59.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 13.)

(No. 274.)

Sir,

Constantinople, May 8, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Aleppo, relative to the economic and administrative condition of that vilayet, together with a copy of the reply which I have caused to be addressed to Mr. Longworth.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 59.

Consul Longworth to Sir N. O'Conor.

Sir,

Aleppo, April 15, 1907.

I WOULD submit to your Excellency's perusal the following Report upon the Vilayet of Aleppo. It will not be found, I hope, unduly long, needlessly detailed, or too condensed. Errors will, I further trust, be indulgently overlooked, collected, as the materials have been, and embodied, as they are being, under pressure of other work. The statistics given are derived from the best available sources of information. Though obtained with care and trouble, they cannot, I fear, be considered as more than an approach to accuracy. They sufficiently offer, however, an insight for future comparison into the present condition of this province, which is now passing through a state of transition. The railway, indeed, has already reached its capital, opened its southern districts, and brought its people into closer touch with the outer world. Hopes may therefore be entertained that ere long it will recover to some degree at least its former commercial importance and economic welfare.

Country.—Extending from the Mediterranean eastwards to the Euphrates, the Vilayet of Aleppo lies between longitude 35° 45′–39° 15′ and latitude 35° 29′–38° 36′. Its borders are: north, the Vilayets of Adana, Sivas, Karput, and Diarbekir; south, those of Beirut and Damascus; and east, the independent Sanjak of Zor. In area it is about 30,340 square miles, of which about 12,124 in the north and west are highlands, and about 17,216 in the south and east are plains.

Port. The port of the vilayet is Alexandretta. It has a shallow shore, but an anchorage safe and spacious. The town, which adjoins a fever-breeding marsh as yet only partially drained, is almost deserted by its 12,000 inhabitants during the unhealthy summer months. It consists of a Government house, a custom-house, a military depôt, 917 houses, 352 shops, 25 warehouses, 3 hotels, 15 khans, 21 coffee-houses, 4 restaurants, 3 clubs, 13 taverns, 16 mills, 21 ovens, 1 slaughter-house, 9 tile kilns, 2 baths, 10 fountains, 2 mosques, 4 churches, and 5 schools.

Capital.—The capital (Aleppo) is 70 miles inland, reached through the "Syrian Gates," a pass of Mount Amanus, 1,980 feet high, and across a plateau at an average altitude of 1,300 feet. It is built on eight limestone hillocks, and through it flows the Koeik, a small river which loses itself in a morass 18 miles south. Situated in latitude 36° 12′, longitude 37° 10′, and altitude 1,140 feet, its mean temperature is 39° fahrenheit in winter and 84° in summer. The inhabitants, officially estimated at 111,831, are believed to fully number 200,000 souls. The buildings are of freestone, flat-roofed, solidly built, and roomy. The vast warehouses, the commodious offices, the arabesqued and wainscoted dwellings, all bear mute testimony to by-gone opulence and prosperity. The city contains a Government house, barrack, military depôt, soldiers' hospital, 20 guard-houses, a railway station, a clock tower, 12 bridges, 15,791 houses, 13 hotels, 8 restaurants, 98 coffee-houses, 117 khans, 50 warehouses, 7,700 shops, 157 flour mills, 112 ovens, 2 slaughter-houses, 2,915 factories, 129 dye-houses, 15 oil mills, 12 soap works, 8 tanneries, 5 printing offices, 23 dispensaries, 2 hospitals, 2 lunatic asylums, 77 fountains, 10 baths, 3 colleges, 32 schools, 17 churches, 4 monasteries, 169 mosques, 182 tekehs, and 21 burying grounds.

Population.—The population of the vilayet is given in the Salnameh, or official calendar, as 906,574 souls. A nearer estimate would be 1,500,000, for at least 300,000 villagers of the Imperial domains are excluded, while more than 200,000 inhabitants, both nomad and sedentary, evade registration to escape the military exemption tax and service in the army. The language spoken east, south, and west is Arabic. It ceases northwards, where Kurdish begins around Urfa and Turkish among the villagers of Killis and Aintab. The various elements composing the population are Arabs, Turks, Circassians, Kurds, Turkomans, Ansaris, Yezidis, Druses, Armenians, Syrians, Maronites, and Jews, with a sprinkling of mostly German-speaking Europeans. In town the Moslems are mainly Government officials, property owners, small traders, and butchers, while the Christians with the Jews are bankers, merchants, doctors, lawyers, masons, artisans, &c. In the villages names alone distinguish Moslems from Christians, for religious observances there are none, while in dress, manners, and customs they are alike, the women being all unveiled and burdened equally with indoor work and outdoor labour. (Table I.)

Education.—Education is backward. The surtax on land assigned for the purpose goes mostly elsewhere. None of the schools are self-supporting, and many of them exist only on paper. They total up to 990—that is, 710 Moslems, 250 Christians, and 30 Jewish schools, with an average attendance of 19,000, 8,000, and 2,000 pupils. The instruction is on the whole very elementary, and religious rather than secular. French is, however, taught in a few, and in a fewer still English, a language which has lately come into favour, and for which teachers are now in demand. The people in general are intelligent, but indolent. Honesty and truthfulness do not distinguish the men, nor thrift and frugality the women. The townfolk are decidedly priest-ridden and narrow-minded, the Mahommedans less so than the Christians and Jews, probably because forming the vast majority of the inhabitants they can afford to be tolerant. It is certainly not because the Mufti of Aleppo is a better spiritual guide than the Syrian Catholic Patriarch, the Melchite Metropolitan, the Armenian Gregorian Archbishop, the Armenian Catholic Archbishop, the Chaldeans Bishop, or the Chief Rabbi.

Industries.—The chief seats of industries are Aleppo, Aintab, Marash, Urfa, and Antioch. First in order of importance are native manufactures, which have long been renowned throughout the East for their fineness and durability. They consist of silk, cotton, and woollen stuffs, plain, dyed, and printed, some striped and flowered, others interwoven with gold and silver threads. British yarns are mostly used, and some 14,000 hand-looms are worked in weaving these materials, which reach not rarely a yearly value of 500,000*l*. The carpet industry at Urfa is of next importance. It is a German charitable enterprise started in 1897 for the relief of destitute Armenians. The carpets which are of pure wool, handsome design, and various sizes, are sent mostly to Berlin, London, and Paris. At Aleppo silk rugs are made in patterns both European and Oriental. The price is about 5*l*. the square yard for one close in pile and harmonious in colour. The silk used is Chinese, French, and native. Very delicate and dainty needle-work is produced at Aintab and also at Urfa. The American lady missionaries have indeed succeeded since the disturbances in reviving and developing among their then distressed female neighbours the lost art of embroidery. Handkerchiefs and scarves, napkins and doilies, table-cloths and coverlets, all are finely worked and neatly finished on silk, cambric, or Belfast linen. The more costly and intricate specimens fetch at least 18*s*. the square foot. Another article of local product is soap. That of Antioch meets with a good sale in the Adana Vilayet, while that of Aleppo is in great demand even beyond Syria, Anatolia, and Arabia. The several tanneries, dye works, potteries, foundaries, glass-works, oil-mills, &c., are merely of domestic interest, and need therefore no special mention.

Agriculture.—The land is productive on the whole, particularly so the plains of Antioch, Killis, Idlib, Aintab, Urfa, and Maara. Fallowed fields are rarely seen, nor is manure much used, and yet the crops of winter, spring, and summer are generally very abundant. It is only where irrigation is difficult that long and dry summers parch up almost all vegetation. Cultivation is still carried out in the simple primitive manner of the patriarchal ages. No modern machinery has yet been introduced, and in this the Aleppo Vilayet is behind that of Adana. All is done by the labour of man and beast with implements of the rudest make and kind. The soil is tilled into shallow furrows with light wooden ploughs, the seed is scattered on the ground broadcast, while the harvest is reaped with sickles, threshed by sledges, and winnowed with forks. The waste is great. Scarcely 15 per cent. of the villagers are owners or leaseholders. A large number people the Imperial domains, the rest are either partners or tenants of citymen, who provide money for seed and cattle and share in return two-thirds of the produce less the tithes. The condition of the peasant is wretched. His bell-shaped

hut of mud or clay, reeds or brushwood, betokens an existence poor and squalid. Rarely is he out of the hands of the usurer; each tries to defraud the other, and life is spent in wranglings. The money-lender invariably ends by recouping himself amply, and yet the villager shuns the Agricultural Bank. He instinctively prefers to obtain a loan at even more than 30 per cent. interest than borrow from the Government. Shrewdness in this may guide him, for he thus avoids in default of payment the certain risk of losing his land.

Products.—The vegetation of spring and early summer is remarkable. Various plants, herbs, and flowers, delicate and hardy, non-tropical and semi-tropical, grow side by side with luxuriant profusion. Few only are as yet collected for medicinal, culinary, and industrial purposes. Among them is the liquorice-root, found chiefly near Antioch, Killis, Rakka, and Urfa. The yield, which is plentiful, has practically become since 1902 a monopoly of the American Tobacco Trust, conjointly with Messrs. MacAndrew and Forbes, a British firm having its head office at Smyrna. Their principal agents are Englishmen, and no less than 40,000 natives earn a winter livelihood by extracting the root. The yellow berry having fallen in demand is now scarcely gathered, the more extensive use of aniline dyes abroad being no doubt the cause. The white mulberry grows throughout the province, but it is only grafted in a few northern localities and along a narrow strip of coast country. The majority of the inhabitants have yet to realize that substantial profits can be made out of silk-worm rearing. Cotton is produced at Idlib and Killis, but, owing to lack of water, it is of poor quality and short staple. Its cultivation with American seed should be attempted elsewhere. The rich alluvial banks of the Euphrates would perhaps be suitable. Rice is more notably grown near Marash and Suverik, pistachios at Aleppo and Aintab, oranges, &c., at Swedia, and corn to a sufficiency in most of the arable plains. The average ratio of seed sown to grain harvested on one acre of land is in bushels wheat 3 to 30, barley 3 to 45, oats 6 to 90. The rotation of crops is usually in spring chick-peas, lentils, aniseed, and vetches; in summer maize, beans, cowpeas, millet, sesame, and cotton; in winter wheat, oats, barley, beans, and flax. The harvest of 1906 was poor in general owing to an unusually wet spring. The low lands in particular long remained soaked, the result being that a bushel of oats reaped on the plains scarcely weighed 35 lb. as against 50 lb. from the uplands. Other grains suffered proportionally, but the millet yielded from 60 to 70 fold. (Table II.)

Live Stock.—The country is admirably adapted for the rearing of animals. Flocks, herds, and fowls need guarding but little tending in these homes of the gazelle and francolin. Vast plains and rich pastures abound east on the Euphrates, west on the Orontes, and north on the Jehan. Large grazing grounds, moreover, border the lakes of Antioch and Mudick, and through many others flow the Kueik, Kabur, Sejur, Afrin, and Karasu. Next to Aleppo, the great cattle market is Killis, where most of the animals after crossing the Euphrates at Birejik are to be met with, amongst them being fine specimens of the native horse, mule, and ass, sheep, goats, and oxen. Camels, dromedaries, and Arab horses raised by the nomads of the Syrian desert are chiefly found at Maara. Sheep for the Syrian and Egyptian markets are mainly drawn from the flocks of the Anazeh tribes west of the Euphrates, to the value of about 50,000*l.* a-year. Buffaloes in herds are mostly to be seen wallowing in the mire of the Antioch swamps. The existence of the pure Arab steed in those parts seems a myth, and furthermore the prices asked for half-breeds are audaciously exorbitant, ranging from 100*l.* to 200*l.*, when 20*l.* to 40*l.* would be dear. At and beyond Urfa are found horses of English stock from sires imported after the Crimean war, forming a distinct local variety. (Table III.)

Forests.—The forests are confined for the most part to the slope of the coast mountains, all of which are densely wooded except Mount Cassius and Mount Amanus. The belt which is struck at about 1,000 feet reaches an altitude of 6,000 feet. It is in length about 45 miles, and varies in width from 10 to 30 miles. Extensive forests also exist northwards in the neighbourhood of Marash, Zeitun, and Urfa. The lower levels are generally covered with pine, oak, and cedar; the higher with beech, birch, and fir. Other trees of less timber value are found, some of which are fruit-bearing, such as the olive, walnut, and mulberry. The preservation of the still magnificent forests is a need of the utmost importance. The Law of 1870, which may be theoretically good, is practically in abeyance. Control there is little or none. Trees are felled indiscriminately—the noblest by the timberman, its saplings by the charcoal burner and tar-maker. Fires, moreover, recklessly set by shepherds and villagers, threaten to make the mountains as bare as the plains.

Mines.—The province abounds in mineral ores, some specimens of which, analyzed in Europe, show richness. The deposits have yet to be prospected, opened out, and

developed. Not a mine is being seriously worked, owing to lack of capital, good roads, cheap transports, and government facilities. The following minerals are known to exist abundantly in the indicated localities: silver, 18 miles north-west of Marash; copper, 1½ miles south-east of Aleppo; iron, 12 miles west of Zeitun; and coal 70 miles south-east of Aleppo. Antimony, manganese, chrome, boracite, and bitumen are found in the mountainous neighbourhood of Alexandretta, gypsum round lake Jebul; fuller's-earth close to Aleppo and Killis, besides, red, yellow, and black marble quarried out near Aleppo, Killis, Marash, and Aintab, and yet marble is imported from abroad.

Revenue.—The normal financial condition of the vilayet is indebtedness. Though revenue exceeds expenditure the coffers are always empty. Money is with difficulty found to meet even ordinary liabilities, such as the claim of a contractor, the pay of a gendarme, the ration of a soldier. The incessant and persistent demand of the central Government for immediate remittances is the cause. Neither the Porte nor the Palace concern themselves much with the welfare and development of the country. What they want and what they obtain is money. The provincial Budget for the Turkish financial year 1905–1906 is herewith annexed. It shows the revenue to have been £T. 402,750 and the expenditure £T. 311,380, but certain assignments are not included—namely, war indemnity, £T. 32,000; railway guarantees, £T. 81,650; and havalies, £T. 109,000, which if added would bring the total disbursements to £T. 434,030. This gives a deficit of £T. 32,200, and the question is how it was covered. It was covered not only by loans, but by non-payment of stipends and pensions. No portion was paid by the Civil List, much as the Imperial domains curtail the legitimate revenue of the province. Last year's income derived from the estates amount to £T. 46,500—the items being tithes, £T. 32,000; sheep-tax, £T. 12,000; camel-tax, £T. 1,000; and fishery, £T. 1,500. It is worth recording here that twenty years ago the Sultan had not a plot of ground within the vilayet. Since then His Majesty has appropriated for himself no less than 613 villages inhabited by 250,000 peasants and 50,000 nomads exempted from taxation and military service. The domains are five in number. The smallest but richest of them being that of Antioch, which has eight farms, a fruit garden, a flour mill, and a fish monopoly. The others take in the best parts of the arable, well-watered tract of country north-east of Aleppo. They are by name Membij with 155 villages, Abu-Kalkal with 170, Jebel-Hass with 130, and Jebel-les with 105. The estates are not delimited by well-defined boundaries, and the Sultan's agents are apt to think that title-deeds confer no indefeasible right of ownership; adjacent lands are often acquired in a forcible and illegal manner. (Table IV.)

Governors.—The head of the administration is the Vali Mohamed Nazim Pasha, an elderly gentleman of delicate health. His first Governorship was the Mutessarifilik of Adana, to which post he was promoted in 1893 from being Maktubji, or Chief Secretary at Aleppo. The expulsion of an Austrain subject charged with befriending Armenian revolutionaries brought it to an abrupt end. His recall from Mersina, with that of Hilmi Pasha, then Vali of Adana, was demanded and obtained. It left him for a time without office, a lesson which he evidently remembers, for his treatment of Europeans is now most friendly and loyal. It is said of him that as Mutessarif of Kaisarieh and Vali of Diarbekir he was open to bribery. If so, the change is great, for not a whisper has been heard of his touching more than his monthly emoluments of £T. 200 since his appointment here in October 1905. He may be thought weak at times, but no one doubts his integrity of character or singleness of purpose. Hence he must be considered at worst as a public spirited functionary who had ceased to be corrupt after acquiring elsewhere, sordidly enough, a sufficiency to make him less dependent on the good-will of the Palace clique. The Mutessarif of Urfa is Neshat Bey, son of the Minister of Police, Shefik Pasha. First at Montesheh, now at Urfa, he is a young Governor of only two years' standing. Though intelligent and active he has little experience, and is fond of gambling. At Marash is Husni Pasha, a middle-aged man, transferred there in 1904 from Shabin-Karahissar. He is said to possess more arrogance than judgment. Both Mutessarifs receive a salary of £T. 50 a-month. The Kaimakams number twenty-one, and of these, while the worst are at Maara, Rakka, and Albistan, those of Aleppo, Beilan, Bab, and Rum-Kaleh are reported to be good, honest, and active. Salaries range from £T. 12½ to £T. 25 a-month; the pay of the sixty-five Mudirs being from £T. 3 to £T. 5. (Table V.)

Security.—With the exception of the nomad Kurds and Arabs, who delight and indulge in tribal feuds and raids, the inhabitants are in a marked degree peaceful and law abiding. Professional brigands there are none, and highway robbers are very rare. Petty thefts and cattle lifting, however, are common—oftener with than without the connivance of some Government agent or influential notability. Details of the police, gendarmery, and military forces are given herewith. The police number 67, of which

2 are Christians. Their pay is from £T. 3 to £T. 7 a-month. Many of them find it a lucrative occupation to watch prostitutes. The gendarmes number 1,355 men, of whom 4 are non-Moslems. The foot receive £T. 1, and the mounted £T. 1½, besides rations. They all, it is said, extort money enough from the people to make life pleasant and their homes comfortable. The troops belong to the reserve, and of 6,940 all told, 1,490 are mule mounted. They are employed mainly on fiscal and constabulary service among the roaming tent-dwellers of the desert. (Tables VI, VII, VIII.)

Justice.—One of the crying evils under which the people groan is the absence of justice. The laws are good, but shameless unconcern, laxity, and corruption attend their application. The offender must indeed be poor if he cannot bribe the gendarme and thus evade arrest, or bribe the examining Judge and thus evade imprisonment. He has, besides, another means of escape—namely, the Imperial farms, for once within their precincts the fugitive criminal is safe and beyond the law. The prisons are nevertheless overcrowded. Explanation of this is to be sought in the dilatoriness of the Courts. Even a simple ordinary police case takes months, and if appealed against years, to decide. It is a poor excuse to say the witnesses summoned fail to attend, for they naturally prefer to sacrifice a little money than much time. The accused meanwhile, often innocent, awaits trial, and thus from no fault of his own he may be forgotten and left to pine in prison indefinitely. Personal emolument is apparently the sole aim of a judicial official. It is an incentive to malpractices, kept in no check, and hence glaring acts of injustice pass unheeded. The Vali should be empowered to interfere, and to exercise some restraint when needful. As it is, the only deterrent is the possibility of an appeal to the Court of Cassation at Constantinople, which few of the aggrieved persons can afford, and fewer still consider of much utility. The following are the names of the principal judicial officers at Aleppo: Public Prosecutor, Atif Bey; Inspector, Ismail Haki Bey; Presidents of Courts of Appeal—(Civil) Abed-el-Rahman Nessib Effendi, (Criminal) Tewfik Effendi; Presidents of the Courts of First Instance—(Civil) Misbah Effendi, (Criminal) Osman Ramzi Effendi; President of the Commercial Court, Seif-el-Din Effendi; Examining Judges, Hushni Effendi and Tewfik Effendi.

Routes.—The Rayak–Homs–Hama Railway was completed to Aleppo and opened for traffic early in October. It is a single broad-gauge line, linked at Rayak to the Beirut–Damascus narrow-gauge railway. It traverses a fertile country, is 231 kilom. long, and has a kilometric guarantee of 12,500 fr., chargeable to the revenue of the Damascus Vilayet. Its extension northwards to Tell-Habesh, 8 miles east of Killis, has, it appears, been decided upon, and will be carried out in the near future, as well as the sections joining Bulgurlu to Adana and Adana to Tell-Habesh. The construction of these lines and those south of Tebuk to Mecca will, when completed, in, perhaps, seven years' time, bring the capital of the Empire within easy and rapid reach of Islam's holy cities. It will, moreover, viewed strategically, increase Turkey's military power in Syria and Yemen. The making of roads, however, for pilgrims or troops is not the same thing as the opening up of ways for trade and traffic. Take Rayak, for instance, where, owing to a break of gauge, merchandize remains stranded. The inconvenience and expense thus entailed is such that the merchants of Homs and Aleppo still prefer to receive and send their goods by the old camel routes of Tripoli and Alexandretta. A great want, much felt and most devoutly wished, is a railway between Alexandretta, Aleppo, and Meskeneh. The existence of such a line, connecting the Mediterranean with the Euphrates, would indeed be to the interest of the people and the Government. It would enormously and rapidly increase the commercial prosperity of Northern Syria, Southern Kurdistan, and Western Mesopotamia. Feasible it is at about 1,000,000*l.*, and profitable it would be without a kilometric guarantee. Sooner or later the line must be built, and, as British subjects were first to propose the project, to a British Syndicate should alone be granted the Concession. Most of the existing roads of the vilayet are mere tracks, and such as are called highways are few and badly kept. Those practicable for carriages in summer, if not in winter, are Aleppo to Alexandretta, 100 miles; Top-Boghas to Antioch, 15 miles; Makali viâ Killis to Aintab, 115 miles; Aleppo to Berejek, 35 miles; Aleppo to Meskeneh, 65 miles; and Aintab to Berejek, 40 miles.

Trade.—Viewed from a general standpoint, the commercial condition of the province is not unsatisfactory. Last year's sea-borne trade amounted at Alexandretta to imports 2,394,372*l.*, and exports 1,393,333*l.*, our share being in the one 1,189,350*l.*, and in the other 112,815*l.* About two-thirds of the total represents the trade of the vilayet, the remaining one-third is that of the outlying districts dealing with Aleppo, which is the distributing centre of an extensive region. The shipping at the port of

Alexandretta totalled in tonnage to 512,012. Steam-ships numbered 393, of 502,706 tons, and sailing-vessels 318, of 9,306 tons. The port was visited by 122 British steamers, of 130,624 tons, and the cargoes in value were 221,285*l.* from, and 22,581*l.* to the United Kingdom, and 1,196,781*l.* from, and 539,916*l.* to other countries. The boats of the Prince Line, which call six times a month, have accommodation for a few passengers.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

Annex.

Table I.—Population.

Sanjak.	Kazas.	Moslems.		Christians.		Jews.		Total.	
		Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.
Aleppo	Aleppo	39,203	41,180	14,588	12,099	5,012	4,165	58,803	57,444
	Aintab	37,351	32,569	10,192	9,170	364	332	48,107	42,071
	Killis	34,588	32,569	2,559	1,706	392	286	37,139	34,220
	Alexandretta ..	7,951	6,786	2,522	1,915	57	72	10,553	8,793
	Beilan	5,254	4,757	1,152	970	10	8	6,416	5,235
	Antioch	37,786	33,448	4,970	3,217	149	131	41,905	36,796
	Harem	14,161	13,258	42	21	..	..	14,203	13,279
	Jisr-Shugr ..	12,482	11,553	2,758	1,697	..	..	14,740	13,160
	Idlib	25,981	23,165	361	331	28	16	26,373	23,512
	Bab	11,538	15,217	21	10	..	..	11,559	15,258
	Maara	8,388	9,157	18	25	..	..	8,606	9,182
	Mendáj	2,780	4,170	..	..	..	..	2,780	4,170
	Rakka	13,281	14,039	..	..	..	..	13,281	14,039
	Total ..	250,747	242,198	39,216	31,071	5,942	5,010	295,765	277,459
Marash	Marash	21,769	21,867	9,153	8,183	108	105	34,030	30,155
	Ainstan	21,923	20,908	653	627	..	..	22,576	21,535
	Zeitun	4,304	3,424	5,660	4,486	..	..	9,964	7,910
	Anderin	9,597	7,605	1,459	1,131	..	..	11,056	8,736
	Bazarojik	11,598	10,611	24	17	..	..	11,622	10,628
	Total ..	72,191	64,415	16,949	14,444	108	105	89,328	79,014
Urfa	Urfa	27,102	24,739	8,087	6,779	248	243	35,435	31,719
	Harran	1,932	2,201	..	..	..	..	1,932	2,201
	Suruj	9,397	9,325	30	33	..	..	9,427	9,358
	Rum-Kaleh ..	12,584	11,142	591	398	2	..	13,187	11,540
	Birejik	11,719	11,381	778	720	28	21	12,525	12,122
	Total ..	63,134	58,951	9,396	7,930	278	264	72,806	67,013
	Grand total ..	386,072	365,564	64,591	53,445	6,328	5,379	455,896	423,516

Table II.—Products.

	Sanjaks.			Total.
	Aleppo.	Urfa.	Marash.	
	Bushels.	Bushels	Bushels.	Bushels.
Apples, pears, and apricots	19,800	2,500	1,400	23,700
Artichokes (Jerusalem)	500	1,600	200	2,300
Barley	3,036,800	691,000	410,000	4,137,800
Beans	27,900	1,000	3,500	32,400
Chick-peas	65,800	16,600	6,500	89,300
Cotton	41,200	2,900	5,500	50,300
Cumin	1,000	200	300	1,500
Figs	16,000	400	100	16,500
Grapes	58,600	43,000	49,300	150,900
Haricot-beans	9,500	1,500	3,400	14,400
Hemps	2,200	5,700	..	7,900
Lentils	137,400	20,400	5,400	163,200
Liquorice	53,800	8,500	..	62,300
Maize	94,300	18,500	4,000	116,800
Melon	81,500	14,000	12,600	108,100
Millet	354,600	121,500	43,500	519,600
Nuts	4,700	800	900	6,400
Oats	80,000	5,000	..	85,000
Olives	299,900	14,200	..	314,100
Oranges	3,300	..	..	3,300
Peas	3,000	..	..	3,000
Pistachios	2,000	4,000	300	6,300
Pomegranate	9,300	4,300	500	14,100
Rice	10,300	2,000	35,300	47,600
Rye	1,300		28,500	29,800
Sesame	74,600	10,800	3,300	88,700
Sumach	200	..	2,300	2,500
Tobacco	6,800	500	500	7,800
Vetches	159,000	3,900	7,200	175,100
Wheat	3,547,100	960,000	728,000	5,235,100
Yellow-berry	1,000	..	100	1,100

Table III.—Live Stock.

	Sanjaks.			Total.
	Aleppo.	Urfa.	Marash.	
Horses	50,000	12,000	18,000	80,000
Mules	6,000	1,000	2,000	9,000
Asses	36,000	16,000	18,000	70,000
Camels	61,000	32,000	2,000	95,000
Oxen	135,000	48,000	92,000	275,000
Buffaloes	1,000	..	3,000	4,000
Sheep	950,000	378,000	105,000	1,433,000
Goats	455,000	257,000	286,000	1,002,000
Fowls	488,000	78,000	159,000	725,000

Table IV.—Provincial Budget.

Revenue.	£ T.	Expenditure.	£ T.
Judicial fees and fines	8,950	Civil Service	22,240
Land tax	78,470	Fiscal	20,000
Military exemption tax	29,610	Gendarmerie	27,000
Public works	13,570	Magistracy	8,750
Sheep and camel tax	61,320	Military	192,120
Tithes	183,300	Pensions	22,930
Title-deeds and transfers	4,750	Police	2,930
Trade licences	17,120	Religious Magistracy	4,820
Sundries	10,960	Sundries	11,450
Total	402,750	Total	311,380

Table V.—Governors.

Sanjaks.	Kazas.	Nahich.	Villages.	Governors.
Aleppo	Aleppo	1	113	Mohamed Nazim Pasha.
				Abed-el-Gany Tewfik Bey.
	Aintáb	8	207	Mustafa Naili Bey.
	Killis	2	469	Ali Nazli Bey.
	Alexandretta	1	24	Saleh Effendi.
	Beilan	1	50	Hussein Zaki Bey.
	Antioch	4	173	Mohamed Raoof Pasha.
	Harem	2	172	Mustafa Fehmi Effendi.
	Jisr-Shughr	1	169	Fatin Bey.
	Idlib	3	117	Haji Mohamed Taher Effendi.
	Maara	1	167	Mustafa Jemal Bey.
	Bab	5	198	Abed-el Samad Mansur Bey.
	Manbej	1	450	Mohamed Shafik Bey.
	Rakka	1	83	Nesralla Bey.
Marash	Marash	8	112	Hassan Hussein Pasha.
	Albistan	1	53	Mohamed Arsun Bey.
	Zeitun	1	80	Anastash Effendi.
	Anderin	1	88	Mohamed Lutfi Bey.
	Bazarjik	1	81	Hussein Wahid Effendi.
Urfa	Urfa	6	382	Neshat Bey.
	Harran	3	248	Hussein Tewfik Effendi.
	Suruj	1	237	Mustafa Faik Effendi.
	Rum-Kaleh	1	185	Tewfik Bey.
	Birejik	1	134	Shakir Bey.
	Total	65	4,032	

Table VI.—Police.

District.	Officers.	Men.	Total.	Commissaries.
Aleppo	23	31	54	Hussein Fehmi Effendi.
Marash	3	3	6	Ismail Bey. — Chief Commissary.
Urfa	3	4	7	Kazim Bey. — Omar Tewfik Bey.

Table VII.—Gendarmerie.

District.	Battalion.	Horse.			Foot.			Total.			Commanders.	
		Companies.	Officers.	Men.	Companies.	Officers	Men.	Companies.	Officers.	Men.		
Aleppo	1	9	29	445	..	..	..	9	29	445	Major Mohamed Effendi	Lieut.-Col. Yahia Haiati Bey.
„	2	..	..	..	6	22	406	6	22	406	Major Sedegh Effendi	
Marash	3	3	11	135	2	6	122	5	17	257	Major Daniel Effendi	
Urfa	4	2	7	116	2	7	131	4	14	247	Major Mohamed Effendi	

Table VIII.—Troops.

Division (Ferka)			Brigade (Liwa).			Regiment (Alay).			Centre of—		Commanders of Battalions (Tabors).
Station.	No.	Commander.	Station.	No.	Commander.	Station.	No.	Commander.	Enrolment.	No.	
Aleppo ..	9	Commander of Division: General Hassan Bagi Pasha	Aleppo ..	37	Lieut.-General Mohamed Ali Pasha	Aleppo ..	73	Lieut.-Colonel Saleh Sharif	Aleppo (Farafra)	1	Major Mustafa Nuri Effendi.
									„ (Kasarlek)	2	„ Mohamed Nuri Bey.
									Rab	3	„ Hussein Bey.
									El-Deir ..	4	„ Mohamed Nishat Effendi.
						Latakie ..	74	Colonel Ahmad Bey..	Latakie ..	1	„ Emin Effendi.
									Sahiun ..	2	„ Khahiri Effendi.
									Jebel Samaan ..	3	„ Assad Bey.
									Idlib	4	„ Mohamed Riza Effendi.
			Urfa ..	38	.. ..	Urfa ..	75	Lieut.-Colonel Osman Aser Bey	Urfa ..	1	„ Abd-el-Latif Effendi.
									Seruj	2	„ Hassan Tahsin Effendi.
									„	3	„ Mohamed Effendi.
									Rum-Kaleh ..	4	„ Ahmed Riza Effendi.
						Aintab ..	76	Colonel Kalussi Bey	Aintab ..	1	„ Kalil Effendi.
									Kiss-Lahasar ..	2	„ Hassan Hilmi Effendi.
									Kellis	3	„ Haji Hassan Tahsin Effendi.
									Anaz	4	„ Rajab Bey.
Adana ..	20	Commander of the Division: General Shakir Pasha	Alexandretta	80	Lieut.-General Sabet Pasha	Marash ..	79	.. ..	Marash ..	1	„ Khairi Effendi.
									Bazarahik ..	2	„ Said Bey.
									Albistan ..	3	
									Zaitun ..	4	„ Mohamed Kaleb Bey.
						Alexandretta ..		Lieut.-Colonel Aly Riza Bey	Alexandretta ..	1	„ Jahed Effendi.
									Antioch ..	2	„ Zahid Effendi.
									Urdu	3	„ Haji Ahmed Effendi.
									Harem ..	4	„ Hilmi Effendi.

Inclosure 2 in No. 59.

Mr. Tilley to Consul Longworth.

Constantinople, May 6, 1907.

Sir,

I AM directed by His Majesty's Ambassador to thank you for your despatch No. 13 of the 15th ultimo, containing your Report on the economic and administrative condition of the vilayet. His Excellency suggests that the interest of your remarks on its agricultural condition would have been considerably increased, and that they would have had a more practical value if you had gone closer into the question of the special kind of agricultural implements for which sale might be found, and still more so if you had intimated to British manufacturers how they should proceed, and what agents they should employ.

It seems curious that the extension of the railway to Aleppo should not have opened opportunities for the development of British trade, and his Excellency would be glad if you would furnish him with some observations on this point.

I am, &c.

(Signed) J. A. C. TILLEY.

[15856] No. 60.

Director of Military Operations to Foreign Office.—(Received May 14.)

THE Director of Military Operations presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and transmits, for the information of Sir E. Grey, two copies of documents on the subject of Syrian and Arabian affairs.

War Office, May 13, 1907.

P.S.—This Directorate has prepared a short work entitled "Notes on Arabia," and is having it printed.

G.

Inclosure 1 in No. 60.

Major Maunsell to Colonel Count Gleichen.

(Extract.) *Nazareth, March* 28, 1907.

I MET Dr. Gould in Acre yesterday, who is a medical missionary, just come in for a few days from Es Salt on the far side of Jordan. He gets several patients from the Nejd, and can in this way get a good deal of news from these and the various Arab tribes east of Jordan. He tells me that he had last heard that Ibn Saoud, having defeated Ibn Rashid, was marching on Hail. This you have already got; he had heard of no result of the fight yet.

He told me that there have been signs lately of a general movement among the Arabs to attack the railway, probably at the present railhead or somewhere in that direction.

The Arabs quite see that it will be the means of bringing down Turkish troops to get into Central Arabia, and they are getting more and more hostile to it.

Gould thought there were signs of a movement in the immediate future, and said that the Turks for the last three months have been steadily sending reinforcements down the line to railhead.

In the country just east of Es Salt and the desert on the far side of the line at Amman the principal Arab tribes are the Adwan and Sahur. The Adwan are a confederation with seven minor tribes depending, and the Adwan Chief Sheikh or Sheikh-i-Sultan, as he is called, can control them all. Martinis are plentiful and every Arab has one, obtained from the large numbers captured from the Turks in the Yemen at various times or smuggled in from coast ports. The Sahur do not go with the Adwan and are a smaller tribe. There are no signs at present of any movement among these Arabs, but all are jealous of the advance of the line.

The Circassian Colonies at Amman, Es Salt, and neighbourhood are meant to protect the line from Arab inroads, but they themselves are very independent and care little for the Government, although they hate the Arabs too.

P.S.—Gould gets some strange patients from Nejd, some had never seen bread or rice, as they get nothing but camel's milk and dates in some places, and flour is imported. Another said he had once seen a piece of soap, but had not touched it. Gould has written a very interesting book about the siege of Acre, published by the Palestine Exploration Fund.

Inclosure 2 in No. 60.

Major Maunsell to Colonel Count Gleichen.

(Extract.) *Damascus, April* 7, 1907.

THE Moslem population of Syria is large in proportion to the number of Redif they have to furnish, and the great losses of the Yemen would not be so severely felt as might be imagined, and the men might be found, but equipment would be very deficient.

In Haifa I saw the German Colony founded some thirty years ago and still fairly flourishing, but the second generation of colonists falls off very quickly from the German original and soon becomes Levantine of rather an inferior quality.

The country is unsuited to colonists from Northern Europe, who have to work in the fields or vineyards.

German influence is, I think, rather exaggerated in this country; the people are disliked everywhere by their overbearing manner (too much mailed-fist "Sedanfest"), and no one has a good word for them, although the Colonies themselves are well ordered and fairly flourishing.

The Deutsche Palestina Bank has branches in Haifa and Nazareth (recently opened), and some German colonists have been buying land on the shore of Tiberias at Magdala and also on the plain of Jezreel, but the Turks place all possible difficulties in the way of purchase.

Russian influence has greatly gone down since the Japanese war and their school propaganda has practically ceased.

Their large hospices in Jerusalem and Nazareth, which look like barracks, are necessary for the immense number of pilgrims that pass through. I saw 1,000 entering Nazareth who had walked from Jerusalem.

French influence is not so great as formerly, and does not extend far outside the walls of their large monasteries.

The Franciscans seem the most powerful, with unlimited money.

Our influence is perhaps the greatest of all foreign Powers, owing to Egypt being so close. English is the language every one wants to learn in the schools.

Inclosure 3 in No. 60.

Major Maunsell to Colonel Count Gleichen.

Dear Gleichen, *Damascus, April* 16, 1907.

I HAVE just returned from a journey down to Tebuk, and railhead now near Akhdar, where they have made a tunnel. The desert was most interesting, and I was able to pick up a good deal of news about Nejd affairs, work on the railway, &c., which would have been impossible here. Construction work is done almost entirely by military labour, about 5,000 men being at work about Akhdar and southwards towards Medain-i-Salih. The garrison of Medina, now some 3,000 men (six battalions), under the direction of some engineer officers, have begun work from Medina doing simply the earthwork and leaving the culverts and bridges until they join up with the line from Medain-i-Salih.

These two forces represent all the Turkish troops in the country, and they are naturally scattered in small detachments and very much exposed to a sudden raid of Bedouin, who are extremely mobile and capable of doing serious damage by a raid in force.

Tebuk is an oasis with good water supply and a large depôt of material and provisions for the troops farther south.

Akhdar has also good water; at Muadhem is a little, and then a long gap of waterless country to Medain-i-Salih.

Water is everything, and intermediate posts and working parties have to be supplied with water and provisions by train daily. Consequently the capture of Tebuk and Akhdar by a raiding force would stop all work, and probably result in the death from thirst or starvation of practically all the troops. Between Maan (good water) and Mudewere is a long waterless stretch, which would make reinforcement difficult.

The Turks have not attempted any defensive measures at either Tebuk or Akhdar; the depôts are quite open with desert all round, and could easily be raided by Arabs who meant business.

The neighbouring small tribes—sections of the Beni Atie—are all hostile, and isolated soldiers are constantly cut off or robbed, although up to the present no serious raid has been made on the line.

Turkish officers I spoke to declared they were perfectly safe, and there was no danger of attack by Arabs in any force, and with 5,000 men available and others which could arrive from Damascus, they thought they could deal with anything the Arabs could do. This is only on the surface, and I know that they are seriously alarmed at the prospect of a raid by Ibn Saoud's forces from Nejd, and I heard from a good source that such an attack may take place soon when he has completed his preparations and mobilized his men, which he is now doing in Kassim.

I heard from many sources down the line that Ibn Saoud was now completely in the ascendant; he had managed to carry off 20,000 camels from Ibn Rashid, and that the latter was defeated and discredited—"yatmishor," he has lain down before Ibn Saoud. There does not seem to have been a decisive battle, but a series of encounters, in which the Rashid lost men and camels.

Ibn Saoud is now in Kassim preparing for another advance, and it is this which disquiets the Turks.

I have also a rumour that Mubarak, the Sheikh of Koweit, is trying to patch up the quarrel between Ibn Saoud and Ibn Rashid; should he succeed, it would obviously be very serious for the Turks, as it is the intention to employ the combined forces against the railway.

As you know, in the past two years the Turks have steadily lost prestige.

As the result of Ahmed Feizi Pasha's expedition with ten battalions from Bagdad in 1905, a Treaty of Arrangement was made by which the Turkish flag was hoisted in Hail, and Ibn Saoud was appointed Kaimakam of Riadh, with other appointments in Kassim, Anaize, and Boreide, implying Turkish sovereignty over these districts where it has not previously existed.

Garrisons were stationed in Hail, Kassim, Anaize, and Boreide, but they have gradually melted away by desertions towards Koweit, and generally through want of provisions or stores. I met an officer at Tebuk whose brother had been one of the last to march out of Kassim, and he had actually sometimes to subsist on locusts.

Sami Pasha (the Turkish Mutessarif or Governor of Kasvim), after repeated appeals to Constantinople for help, supplies, or even instructions, last February, decided that things were hopeless, and retired with the last remnants of the garrison on Medina without orders; when he reported his arrival to the Porte, they said he had better stay where he was. Thus, as matters stand at present, Turkish prestige has suffered greatly, and there is nothing to prevent Ibn Saoud making a descent on the railway, should he manage to combine the tribes against the Turks.

I am told (by Turkish officer) that the Arab mode of fighting is to have about one-fourth of the force employed as cavalry scouting well in front, while the main body are camelmen, each camel mounting two men one behind the other, and carrying a skin of water, some provisions, and cartridges. Such a force is naturally extremely mobile. They are all well armed with Martinis, the same weapon as the Turkish troops have, and against them there are only the scattered posts and working parties strung out along the railway, with the main depôt of Tebuk practically defenceless.

The camelmen dismount to fire, and advance to the attack when they have got close enough.

I cannot trace any confirmation of the report that Sultan Ibn Hamud Ibn Rashid, the reigning Emir, has been assassinated by the old Khaznader of Abdul Aziz. There has been a lot of killing done in the family principally by Sultan himself, so that a mistake might easily have occurred in the name. Even if it did occur, it would not alter the situation very much as regards Ibn Saoud; none of the Ibn Rashid family are worth much now in the field, while Ibn Saoud is said to be a very capable leader, who has lately gained very greatly in prestige.

Ibn Saoud is the real Emir of Nejd, being a direct descendant of the Wahabi Emirs, while Ibn Rashid is at most only Emir of Hail, or Sheikh of the Jebel Shammar tribe.

Constant small reinforcements are being sent down from here as working parties; for instance, in the train I travelled down were eighty Albanians of the guard at Constantinople sentenced to one year's labour on the line for some Palace mutiny, and other trains had gangs of Syrian recruits and labourers going down.

The train I came back in had some fifty wretched poor fellows down with dysentery, typhoid, and scurvy, just packed anyhow on open platform waggons in a blazing sun, without a doctor or attendants of any kind. As I was on the same kind of truck myself with two Turkish officers, I could do little or nothing to help, beyond getting them water and giving them a few oranges and things. Some of them were practically done for when we reached Maan, and every train we passed on its way up had crowds of sick on board.

I met three deserters from the Yemen seated under a tree in Tebuk; they had trudged along all the way through Mecca and Medina: the soldiers and officers had given them bread now and then as they passed by Akhdar and Tebuk. They were not allowed on the train, and as we steamed out of Tebuk I saw them tramping along in the sand, hoping some day to reach Damascus. One told me he was a Laz, from Trebizond, and hoped eventually to reach there!

I found an Italian engineer at Tebuk, who put me up; there are about 300 Italians, Greeks, and Montenegrins employed near Akhdar doing bridging work, as the Turkish engineers are not quite good enough as stone-masons.

I was very fortunate in Tebuk in obtaining a copy of the contoured survey of the 1/10000 from Maan right down to near Medina, which will come in very useful, I hope. I also saw the survey of the Jedda–Mecca line, but could not copy that.

From Medina to Mecca no survey has yet been made.

I managed to find Meisner Pasha, the Engineer-in-chief of the line, here on my return which was very unfortunate, as he goes down to Maan to-morrow.

I had two long talks with him, and he gave me a lot of very interesting information about Syrian railways generally, the Bagdad Railway, and what he intends to do on the Mecca line. They intend first of all to finish up to Medina, after which they intend to take on minor schemes such as the Jedda–Mecca line, the port at Haifa, the Amman-Salt branch, and some minor Syrian branches.

Another project which Izzet Pasha (the Sultan's Chamberlain, and Head of the Hedjaz Railway Commission) is pushing now is an extension from Angora by Sivas and Erzingan to Erzerum and the Russian frontier.

They hope to make it on the same system as the Hedjaz Railway by military labour, but as yet nothing is definite, although Izzet is working at the scheme.

Meisner said he hoped to get on it, as he was tired of the climate of South Arabia.

As regards the French Syrian railways, he told me it was practically assured that they would join and form part of the Bagdad Concession when the new arrangements were concluded. He has promised me a contoured map of the line from here to Maan, and also the Haifa branch, which he will send me through the Consul here, so that will make the map of the line complete. He also drew me a little sketch of his proposed scheme for a port at Haifa.

He said there was absolutely no intention now of making the Maan–Akaba or any other line towards Akaba. After all it was quite useless as a port, there was practically no fresh water except some brackish springs on the beach, and besides there seemed to be English objections.

I am leaving to-morrow morning for Homs by road through Nebk, after which I shall go down to Tripoli, and then probably along the coast-road to Beirut.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

Inclosure 4 in No. 60.

List of Stations on Hamidie–Hedjaz Railway South of Maan.

Station.	From Damascus.	Station.	From Damascus.
	Kilom.		Kilom.
Maan	460	†Tebuk	626
Ghadir-el-Haj	475	Wadi-el-Tih	721
Bir Shaibe	488	Dar-el-Haj	745
*Akaba	515	Mustabi	756
Batn-el-Ghul	521	‡Akdar	761
Wadi Rutm	531	§Khanis	788
Tel Shujun	547	§Ulezad	806
Ramle	556	§Muazzem	829
Medowara	576	§Khat-um-Zune	854
Haraat Amar	595	§Dar-el-Handi	881
Zat-el-Haj	609	§El-Matalli	905
Bud Hurmas.	633	§Abu Taka	919
El-Husn	655	§El-Mezhem	931
Mukattab	678	§Medain-es-Salih	955

(Initialled) F. R. M.

Damascus, April 18, 1907.

Inclosure 5 in No. 60.

Major Maunsell to Colonel Count Gleichen.

Tripoli, April 24, 1907.

Dear Gleichen,

I HEARD on leaving Damascus that Ibn Rashid was trying hard to obtain some alliance or protection that would give him a chance against Ibn Saoud. He tried to get the Druzes, but they would have none of the idea, as obviously they could not do much outside their own district of Jebel Druz.

He also has the idea of obtaining British protection, and the Consul told me he wished to send a letter to the King, but nothing has come of it yet.

I went with the Consular dragoman (as a tourist wanting to go to Hail) to see an Arab merchant, Bassam, who is in touch with that country, and found him a very strong partisan of Ibn Rashid. He thought in some way I might get British protection for him. He told me a great deal about routes and the country, and confirmed the news that Ibn Saoud was now in Kassim collecting his forces for another move.

I saw Emir Ali, son of the great Abdul Kader, of Algeria, who knows a good deal about this country, and is closely in touch with Izzet Pasha, the Sultan's Chamberlain, who is a native of Damascus, and the principal Director of the Hedjaz Railway. Curiously enough I found there an officer of the Moroccan army (rank of major) who had just arrived, it is said, to see if he could get any assistance from Emir Ali, which is very doubtful.

Izzet Pasha has not forgotten his native town, and has just introduced electric tramways and light worked by some falls in the River Abana. The streets are narrow and the people slow to move, the result being a boy was run over, upon which the inhabitants rose and smashed three tram-cars to pieces.

Izzet is also building a new station for the Hedjaz Railway in the centre of the town, and a large hotel adjoining.

I could hear nothing of any disturbances at Medina except some attacks on the pilgrim caravan which are of annual occurrence. The Grand Sherif of Mecca is all-powerful between Mecca and Medina, he is energetic, and well liked, does not care much for the Turks, and would assist Ibn Saoud if he made a successful move against the railway.

The powerful Beni Harb tribe between Medina and Mecca give a lot of trouble, and at present even the telegraph, much less the railway survey, cannot pass through their country. But Ibn Saoud is the chief storm-centre; if he makes a successful move against the railway, the Beni Harb, the Beni Atic, and the Grand Sherif would probably all be found on his side, and the Turks would have a lot of trouble.

The Damascus–Homs road is passable for wheels, and useful if Homs were occupied from the coast, and it was intended to push down from there to Damascus. The maps do not show this road or the country along it very well, so I have sketched it in afresh connecting up when possible with the Anti Lebanon survey. Water is rather scarce, but at Nebk and Kuteife are good springs, and at other points is a small supply. From Homs I came down the road to Tripoli, which follows an easy way through the hills round the northern end of the Lebanon. The road is well kept up, and is the only way fit for wheels, as the country on either side is covered with masses of round stones which make movement off the road very difficult, while the spurs of the Lebanon or Ansarie Mountains afford no passage.

I went over two positions on the way, one near Hadidi a strong one.

I have been three days in Tripoli studying the country, possible camping grounds, and positions covering a landing. The most difficult problem is to get away from the masses of orange gardens on the promontory. However, I found an excellent site near a large spring about 1½ miles north of the town, and a good covering position from Deir Ammar to the sea, across the Homs road.

The Lebanon is rather disturbed, and I came down from Homs in company with a Redif battalion from Adana, which was to garrison Tripoli. I got some unique photos of the Turkish Redif and his equipment, or rather want of it. I shall get on to Beirut and then home by Port Saïd, as I have now finished.

Yours sincerely,
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

* This is Akaba-esh-Shamie of the map; the Akaba on the Red Sea is Akaba-el-Misrie.

† Line open to this point for traffic.

‡ Construction trains to this point.

§ Work in progress.

[15890] No. 61.

Mr. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 15.)

(No. 50.)

Sir, *Munich, May* 13, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to report that information is appearing, especially in the Würtemberg newspapers, regarding a German Evangelical Mission recently sent to the Near East under the leadership of Dr. Dryander, the head Court preacher ("Oberhofprediger") in Berlin, and "Konsistorialrat" Lahusen. Count Mirbach, the Kaiserin's "Oberhofmeister," was also attached to the party. The ostensible object of this Mission was to report on and to inspect the various German schools, churches, and institutions in that part of the world, but as the Stuttgart "Schwäbische Merkur" asserts that the Mission was not without political significance, and that it was a proof of the keen interest taken by the Kaiser in the welfare of his evangelical subjects abroad, I venture to send you a few details with regard to it, in case they should not already have reached you.

The first place the Mission touched at was Alexandria, in the month of March; there a celebration was held in honour of the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the German congregation in that city. At Cairo Dr. Dryander and his colleagues spent twelve days, as the great growth of the German colony there necessitated all that time for the thorough inspection of the German schools and institutions, and occasion was taken of the presence of the Commissioners to lay the foundation-stone of a fine new church for the use of the colony. The Commission passed from Egypt to Palestine and Syria, and they visited and inspected in turn the German institutions in Jaffa, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Haifa, Beyrout, and Damascus. At Easter the foundation-stone was laid on the Mount of Olives of the new German Sanitorium, which is to bear the name of the Empress; this was done with great pomp, the Turkish officials assisting. During his stay in Jerusalem Dr. Dryander held a convocation of all the German evangelical pastors in the Near East. At Beyrout celebrations took place in honour of the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the German colony there, and a commemoration service was held in the new German hospital of the "Johanniterorden."

Dr. Dryander and his party then passed from Beyrout to Smyrna, where they instituted the pastor of the new German church which was opened last year. After inspecting the German schools there the Commission journeyed to Constantinople, where they spent some time and were well received by the Sultan, who conferred

decorations upon them, and out of his privy purse is said to have granted them an allowance of 5*l.* a-day for their entertainment. During their stay in that city they installed the newly-appointed pastor for the German Embassy chapel; he is Count Lüttichau, cathedral preacher ("Domprediger") at Berlin, and has been specially selected by the Emperor for this post.

The final work of the Mission has been to organize a new German congregation at Eski-Sher, on the Anatolian Railway. At present there are in that place about 200 German and Swiss persons employed on the line, and it is hoped that, by bringing them closer together, they will form a bulwark of Germanism in that part of the world.

It is the first time that a Commission of this kind has been sent out from Germany to the evangelical churches in Asia Minor, and its significance must not be overlooked, as such Commissions are likely to be sent out with frequency henceforth, and their use will be to show the Germans in Asiatic Turkey that they are not forgotten at home, and that the work they may do in defence of Germanism is highly appreciated by the Kaiser. The extracts which have appeared in the press from the reports of the Commissioners show that everything connected with German institutions in Syria and Palestine appears to be very satisfactory, but special praise is given to the higher girls' schools at Beyrout and Smyrna.

Finally, I will mention that the "Schwäbische Merkur," in estimating the importance of the Mission, states that wherever it went it came to the highly satisfactory conclusion that the spirit of Germanism in the congregations, instead of diminishing by their distance from the Fatherland, showed signs of having strongly increased in intensity, and that the German colonists did not require the protection of any foreign State, as it was evident, even to the Turkish officials, that they were the most satisfactory settlers in the dominions of the Sultan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

[15975] No. 62.

Editor of "Droschak," Organe Fédération Armenienne, to Sir Edward Grey.—
(Received May 15.)

(Telegraphic.) *En clair.*

Geneva, May 15, 1907.

REÇU dépêche viâ Tiflis. Protestation suivante de population Arménienne de Van (Arménie Turque), que nous mettons sous yeux de diplomatie Européenne et du monde civilisé entier :—

"Gouverneur de Van, Ali Bey, a mis par moyens atroces toute une province à sac. On perçoit impôts arriérés vingt-deux ans. Désespoir peuple déjà affamé est au comble. Percepteurs, faute argent, emparent tout ce qu'ils trouvent sur leur chemin; meubles, outils, même démolissent maisons, emportent poutres, coupent arbres jardin, vendent immeubles aux enchères, mesures de perception indescriptibles. On viole femmes, arrache moustache aux hommes, force boire 5 ou 6 litres d'eau. Un habitant village Aratenz mort sous coups, un enfant tué dans bras mère; Hayotzazor et environs 2,300 hommes, femmes, enfants passent nuit depuis six jours dans rue. Nous nous adressons aux Gouvernements d'Europe civilisé, et prions de mettre fin à cette situation infernale, qui menace faire mourir faim, provoque émigration en masse, oblige peuple recourir révolte. Demandons suppression impôts arriérés, respect lois pays, renvoi Gouverneur incriminé."

[16465] No. 63.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 21.)

(No. 278.)

Sir,

Constantinople, May 14, 1907.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 238 of the 22nd ultimo, in which I reported that I had asked His Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin for information respecting a Dr. Hugo Grothe, who was travelling in the neighbourhood of Bagdad, I have the honour to state that Sir F. Lascelles has not been able to furnish me with any very precise particulars, but that he says that German financiers do not seem inclined to

sink capital in pioneer development of the oilfields, or to be taking any steps for prospecting in the regions in question.

As to Dr. Grothe, his Excellency says that his mission, like previous missions which he has conducted, is scientific, and that he is not, "in the proper sense of the word, the representative of any firm."

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

[16413] No. 64.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 21.)

(No. 286.)

Sir,

Constantinople, May 15, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, respecting the state of things in the Bitlis district, which formed the subject also of my despatch No. 209 of the 5th ultimo.

I have, &c.
(For the Ambassador),
(Signed) J. A. C. TILLEY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 64.

Consul Shipley to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 21. Confidential.)

Sir,

Erzeroum, May 1, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Excellency herewith the copies of a despatch which I have received from Mr. Safrastian, Dragoman in charge of His Majesty's Vice-Consulate at Bitlis, in which, after giving some further details as to the general condition of the population of that town consequent upon the recent earthquake, he suggests the following as the best measures for relief—viz., the necessity of providing the people with means of subsistence until the green-stuffs appear and business recommences; the need of reconstruction of the ruined houses; and the supply to the villagers of ploughs, oxen, and seed. Mr. Safrastian will no doubt furnish a further report as to the result of the distribution of Government relief, which, as your Excellency is aware, has begun since the date of his despatch above referred to.

I have further the honour to transmit to your Excellency herewith an extract from a private letter from Mr. Safrastian, dated the 20th April last, giving some interesting information respecting the meetings, referred to in my telegram to your Excellency of the 20th of the same month, of Ulemas and Mussulman Notables in the mosques at Bitlis for the purpose of drawing up statements as to the prosperity of the province, and protesting against any alleged necessity for reform. I may perhaps add, in this connection, and with reference to your Excellency's despatch of the 5th April last, inclosing a copy of a telegram from the "Droshak" to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that I have requested Mr. Safrastian to furnish me with a report on the condition of the Moush and Bitlis districts of his vilayet, communicating to him the first portion of the telegram in question, which appeared to me to refer more particularly to his district. I have further, in accordance with the recommendation contained in your Excellency's despatch above referred to, directed him to exercise careful control over such information as he may obtain, and although no intimation either from him or from any other source has reached me to the effect that another massacre was being contemplated in his district, or that an organized agitation against the Government was in existence among the Kurds, I have requested him to inform me whether, in his opinion, there is any foundation for either of the above statements.

As regards the references made by the telegram of the "Droshak" to this vilayet, it is true that two Armenian girls were abducted at Pekaritch some little time ago, but owing to the prompt action taken on that occasion by the authorities, as reported to your Excellency in my despatch No. 11 of the 5th March last, no complaints have since reached me of a recurrence of that class of outrage. I have, further, no knowledge whatever of any village in this vilayet having, as the telegram states, been Islamized. The inhabitants of Pekaritch—which, I conclude, is the village referred to, there being

no place called Bogoridj in the province—did, in consequence of the abduction of these two girls, threaten that they would go over in a body to Islam, but, as I reported to your Excellency in my despatch No. 11 above referred to, this intention was abandoned, and nothing further has since been heard of the matter. It is perhaps scarcely necessary for me to add that no expression of fear of another massacre has reached me from any part of this vilayet. The condition of the Christians, however, in the district of Khinis, immediately bordering on the Bitlis Vilayet, is far from being satisfactory, and I am preparing a report on the subject, which I trust to forward to your Excellency in the course of a few days.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 64.

Mr. Safrastian to Consul Shipley.

Bitlis, April 20, 1907.

Sir,

WITH reference to my despatch of the 13th instant, I have the honour to report that the Imperial offer of £T. 1,300 (not £T. 1,000, as reported before) is officially confirmed; but the Government here does not seem to move any step forward to relieve the people from the grip of the present horrors.

The construction of wooden huts in every quarter proved absolutely useless, as nobody went to live there, the huts being bare and buried in deep mud. The Relief Committee is doing nothing, and not much is to be expected from it at present.

The American and German missionaries continue the relief, but very little is left in their hands; they will be obliged to end it if they are not provided with further funds.

No shock is felt for last two days. Many would return to their houses had not a severe shock occurred in the night of the 16th instant. In consequence of the heavy rains, other houses collapsed in the course of the week, killing a woman and a child.

The best way of relieving the people, in my opinion, would be to enable them to live on relief for a time, until the greens appear and the business recommences. In the town as well as in villages the reconstruction of the ruined houses is most important. As to the villages, if the peasants are provided with ploughs, oxen, and seed, that will do to them a permanent good.

I have, &c.
(Signed) ARSHAG S. SAFRASTIAN.

Inclosure 3 in No. 64.

Mr. Safrastian to Consul Shipley.

(Private.)
(Extract.)

Bitlis, April 20, 1907.

WITH reference to my private letter of the 6th instant, I take the liberty of adding that now it is understood other signatures were forged on the telegram addressed to the Grand Vizier. In the course of the last fortnight meetings of Turkish clergy and Notables have taken place in the mosques for drawing up reports as to the well-being and happiness of the country. The officials from whom I gather this news tell me that in the meetings it is discussed about The Hague Conference, about the possibility of the Armenian question being raised there. The object of the meetings is, therefore, to prepare "mazbatas," and to prove that there is no need of reforms, the country being prosperous and rich.

[16895] No. 65.

Mr. Block to Foreign Office.—(Received May 24.)

My dear Hardinge,

Constantinople, May 20, 1907.

I THINK the following succinct report on the proposed Panderma–Soma Railway and account of what has recently taken place with regard to the scheme will interest you:—

The proposed line is to run from—

(*a.*) Panderma, a port on the Marmora, viâ Balik-Hissar, to Soma, the terminus of the Smyrna–Magnesia Railway; the line from Smyrna to Soma is 158 kilom.

(*b.*) From a point to be fixed later on the Panderma–Soma line to Broussa viâ Mihalitch.

(*c.*) Two branch lines, one to Kirmâsti, the other to Balia.

In addition to these lines the "Cahier des Charges" includes a port at Panderma, at present only a preferential right.*

The lengths of these lines are as follows:—

	Kilom.
(*a.*) Panderma–Soma	206
(*b.*) Panderma–Broussa (reckoned from Broussa to the junction, from 20 to 30 kilom. from Panderma)	94
(*c.*) Kirmasti	35
Balin	30
Total	365
Balik-Hissar to Panderma is	106
Mihalitch to Broussa is	62

Privileges mentioned in "Cahier des Charges."

The term of the proposed Concession is for ninety years.

All rolling-stock, machinery, &c., for the construction of the line to be free of duty.

Coal, duty-free for fifteen years.

Sleepers and all wood used in construction of line may be cut free from neighbouring forests.

The estimated cost of the line is 75,000 fr. per kilom.; this figure does not include rolling-stock; as the speed limit is fixed at 50 kilom. per hour, the total estimated cost, including rolling-stock, is 85,000 fr. to 90,000 fr. per kilom, to which must be added the concessionnaire's fees and Company charges:—

	Fr.
Estimated cost of railway, 365 kilom., at average price of 88,000 fr. per kilom.	32,120,000
Cost of port, as described	3,500,000
Total	35,620,000
Concessionnaire, promoters, &c.	4,380,000
Grand total	40,000,000

The receipts are estimated at 11,500 fr. per kilom.

This estimate is made on actual existing traffic from exports from the Port of Panderma—

	Fr.
Taking this as a basis, it is estimated that the total receipts will be	4,197,500
Working expenses—	
Taking as a basis railways already working in Turkey, it is estimated at 4,000 fr. per kilom., or	1,460,000
Net receipts	2,737,500

I am not in a position to check these figures. They are furnished by M. Bellet de Lobel, a French civil engineer, who has been endeavouring for years past to obtain the Concession.

I inclose herewith a Report (Inclosure 1) made by M. Lobel on the country through which the railway passes and a map (Inclosure 2).†

I also annex a printed Report (Inclosure 3)† written by M. Lobel in 1898, and a copy of a further Report written in 1901 (Inclosure 4).

M. Lobel states that his Concession has been approved by the Ministry of Public Works and the Council of State, as well as by the Council of Ministers, and that all that is now required is the sanction of the Sultan.

* The concessionnaire has only asked for preferential right for the Port of Panderma: he is of the opinion that an iron landing-stage with iron sheds is preferable to incurring the extra cost of quays and docks.

† Not printed.

It is at this point, however, that M. Lobel found himself unable to proceed.

He was opposed by the Germans and by the Smyrna–Cassaba Railway Company. Both these groups were, he states, prepared to build the line with a kilometric guarantee.

The French Ambassador was informed by the Sultan that the construction of the railway was abandoned for the moment, and, according to M. Lobel, the Smyrna–Cassaba Company, with Mr. Vitalis, who had been his competitor, no longer enjoyed the support of M. Constans.

It was at this juncture that M. Lobel, advised by his friends at the Palace, thought it indispensable to obtain British co-operation, as it was believed that, with the French and British Ambassadors working together, all opposition either on the part of the Germans or on the part of the Smyrna–Cassaba group could be overcome and the Sultan persuaded to grant the required Iradé.

M. Bellet de Lobel, after seeing Mr. Arthur Baker, a British merchant here, who is interested in industrial enterprise in this country and who has powerful friends at Yildiz, addressed himself to me.

M. Lobel's reputation here, like that of most concession-hunters, is not of the best, and I preferred to see the head of the group he represented.

His group in Paris consists of—

Fougerrelle Frères, Rue de Chateaudun.
Compagnie de Fives, Lille.
Desouches, David et Cie.
Tavernier, President of the "Métropolitain."

The latter is President of the Syndicate, and, as far as I can ascertain, is a serious man of business. I made an appointment with him in Paris, and he assured me (1) that he had the support of M. Pichon, and (2) that he would welcome English participation in the enterprise on equal terms.

I regret to state that the English group, to whom the matter was submitted by Mr. Baker, has refused to take the matter up.

This is the present position; I have no idea what M. Lobel now intends to do.

It is hardly necessary for me to state that I have no pecuniary interest in the matter whatsoever, as I have explained to Mr. Baker and to M. Tavernier. I was appealed to in order to assist in bringing the French and English groups into line. I believe that, together, the French and English would have succeeded in obtaining the Concession, and I considered that it was an opportunity for English capitalists thus to participate in a Franco-English enterprise. I failed, however, to do anything, and I presume that the English group, to whom Mr. Baker submitted the matter, was not satisfied with the prospects of the undertaking.

I thought, however, that you would like to hear about it all, and have the above Report on the proposed line. Sir George Clarke also asked me for a short Report; perhaps you would communicate my letter to him.

Yours ever,
(Signed) ADAM BLOCK.

Inclosure 1 in No. 65.

Report respecting the Advantages of a Railway between Brousse and Mihalitch, having a Junction near Panderma with the Panderma–Balikesser–Soma Line (94 *kilom.*).

ACTUELLEMENT le sandjiak et la ville de Brousse n'ont en fait de voie de communication utile que le (malheureux) chemin de fer à voie étroite allant de Brousse ville à Moudania (Mer de Marmara).

La ligne a une longueur de 42 kilom. et aboutit à Moudania à 300 mètres de l'échelle où accostent les mahones, voiliers, petits bateaux, &c.

Le bateau effectuant le service bi- ou tri-hebdomadaire entre Constantinople et Moudania, est dans un état pitoyable, et parcourt ce petit trajet d'environ 90 à 100 kilom. en sept heures quand il fait beau temps—par une mer mauvaise, le temps ne compte plus, et quelquefois alors le voyage est remis, à moins que le bateau ne reste en panne, ce qui arrive quelquefois.

Ce service officiel appartient à la Compagnie Ottomane la "Mahsoussé" dont tous les bateaux sont dans un état effroyable de vétusté.

Brousse, une des grandes villes de l'Empire Ottoman, ville industrielle et commerciale, et son sandjiak, très productif en produits variés, industriels et agricoles, sont donc obligés de rester presque complètement isolés sous tous les rapports, surtout commercialement, faut de moyens pratiques de communication avec les autres localités de la même région.

Rarement les grands bateaux vont charger à Moudania, à moins d'avoir un chargement assez important à prendre.

Les marchandises se chargent à Moudania à l'échelle, sur des mahones, des voiliers, &c., lesquels viennent transborder leur chargement à bord des grands bateaux dans la rade de Moudania si le chargement à prendre par ces grands bateaux est important, sinon ces bateaux prennent ces mêmes marchandises au port de Constantinople seulement.

Toutes ces manutentions sont très onéreuses par suite de la multiplicité de dépenses diverses et aussi surtout par le déchet, plus ou moins grand suivant la nature des marchandises, occasionné par ces diverses manutentions.

Bien entendu au sujet des marchandises importées dont le chiffre est également important, ces mêmes opérations ont lieu en sens inverse avec Constantinople pour le point de départ.

Moudania n'est pas un port—c'est une simple échelle, n'ayant aucune installation en rapport avec l'importance de son mouvement. Du reste, l'installation d'un port à Moudania ne serait pas compensée par une augmentation de trafic, Moudania n'ayant en effet, de par sa situation même, rien à espérer en dehors des produits de Brousse.

Et à cause de cette situation même, Moudania ne pourra jamais devenir une tête de ligne importante.

Par suite de la configuration de cet immense bassin du Karassi ou de Mihalitch, Panderma est le port et la tête de ligne toute indiquée pour devenir l'entrepôt des produits non seulement de ce bassin, mais de toute la région avoisinante.

Le chemin de fer de Panderma–Soma est le trait d'union forcé obligatoire entre Smyrne—la deuxième ville de l'Empire—et la capitale.

La ligne à établir de Brousse à Mihalitch, avec jonction à la ligne Panderma–Soma, est très facile à construire.

Elle suivra la grande route qui existe entre Brousse et Mihalitch.

La région traversée est très fertile, très cultivée. L'élevage du mouton s'y fait en grand. L'industrie y est prospère et y produit des produits variés, et en quantité.

Mihalitch est une ville assez importante, centre d'un commerce très actif, c'est en outre une ville très industrielle en produits du pays.

De Brousse à Mihalitch la ligne aura environ 62 kilom. et de Mihalitch à la jonction la avec ligne Panderma–Soma environ 32 kilom. Cette jonction devant avoir lieu à environ 20 à 30 kilom. de Panderma, Brousse sera donc par chemin de fer à une distance d'environ 110 à 120 kilom. de Panderma.

Brousse se trouvera ainsi en rapport par chemin de fer avec Panderma, Balikesser, Soma, Magnésie, Smyrne, Ouchak, &c., par conséquent en rapport avec les chemins de fer du Cassaba et de l'Anatolie.

Par Panderma, Brousse sera en rapport journalier avec Constantinople, et cela en sept heures.

Actuellement par Moudania, Brousse n'est en communication avec Constantinople que deux ou trois fois par semaine, suivant le saison en neuf à onze heures suivant le bateau, et si le temps est mauvais, la durée du trajet n'a plus de limite.

La ligne Brousse–Panderma a déjà eu un trafic très important, par le transport des produits de la région traversée et par celui des marchandises d'importation, dont le chiffre est important.

Ce trafic augmentera sûrement d'une grande partie, sinon de la totalité des produits dirigés actuellement par voie de Moudania, parce que le trafic par Panderma présentera des avantages que ne pourra jamais posséder Moudania.

L'installation à Panderma soit du port, soit d'une échelle par la Société même du chemin de fer sera faite sur la base des dernières progrès et perfectionnements modernes. La manutention des marchandises se fera à peu de frais.

Les grands bateaux vont déjà charger depuis longtemps à Panderma, qui est sur le passage.

La création d'une échelle ou d'un port leur permettra d'accoster par n'importe quel temps au quai même du chemin de fer, de sorte que l'économie des manutentions et des déchets compensera les quelques kilomètres supplémentaires de chemin de fer à parcourir.

En outre, Panderma est déjà un marché important qui ne fera que progresser aussitôt le chemin de fer construit.

Il est inutile de s'étendre davantage sur les motifs qui militent en faveur de la création d'une voie ferrée entre Brousse et Panderma. La simple énumération de quelques-unes des raisons les plus importantes qui vient d'en être faite, démontre assez l'utilité, pour ne pas dire la nécessité, de ce chemin de fer.

Le trafic actuel est largement suffisant pour rémunérer le capital qui y sera engagé, et cette rémunération est appelée à augmenter très sensiblement, c'est certain.

Dès le début, cette ligne aura une recette brute assurée par le trafic actuel d'au moins 11,000 fr. par kilom., en tenant compte simplement des éléments actuels.

Cette ligne est également une ligne stratégique très importante justement à cause de sa jonction avec la ligne Panderma–Soma, laquelle se joindra avec les lignes du "Cassaba" et de l'Anatolie par cette dernière.

(Signé) BELLET DE LOBEL.

Constantinople, 1901.

[Inclosures 2 and 3 not printed.]

Inclosure 4 in No. 65.

Report by M. de Lobel (dated 1901) *respecting the Railway to Panderma and the Port of Panderma.*

Exposé.

M. BELLET DE LOBEL vient d'obtenir par Iradé Impérial en date du , la Concession, pour une durée de quatre-vingt-dix-neuf années, de la construction et de l'exploitation:—

1. D'un réseau ferré comprenant les lignes suivantes:—

(*a.*) Panderma (port sur la Marmara) par Balikesser à Soma, où aura lieu la jonction avec la ligne Smyrne–Magnésie–Soma, déjà en exploitation et d'une longueur de 158 kilom.;

(*b.*) D'un point à déterminer sur la ligne Panderma–Soma, mais à environ 20 kilom. à 30 kilom. de Panderma à Brousse, par Mihalitch;

(*c.*) De deux points à déterminer entre la jonction Brousse et Balikesser sur la ligne Panderma–Soma, deux embranchements allant l'un à Kermasti, l'autre à Balia;

2. D'un port à Panderma (sous forme, pour le moment, d'un droit absolu de préférence, pour des raisons spécifiées plus loin).

La longueur du réseau ferré est la suivante:—

	Kilom.
(*a.*) Panderma–Soma	206
(*b.*) Point Panderma (compris de Brousse au point de jonction avec la ligne Panderma–Soma)	94
(*c.*) Embranchement Kermasti	35
" Balia	30
Total	365

La ville de Balikesser est à 106 kilom. environ de Panderma. La ville de Mihalitch est à 62 kilom. de Brousse.

Le concessionnaire a préféré se réserver le droit de préférence au lieu de l'obligation de construire de suite le port de Panderma, parce que peut-être conviendrait-il mieux à la Société de construire une grande échelle aux environs de la ville; échelle avec toutes les commodités d'un port, sans les désagréments d'un port situé devant la ville entraînant à des travaux supplémentaires d'embellissement de quais, &c.

Le projet du concessionnaire était de construire de préférence à tout autre système des wharfs en fer, ainsi que cela se pratique en Australie.

Le projet, primitivement étudié, était le même, mais la ligne de Brousse–Panderma

n'en faisait pas partie, néanmoins la région du Vilayet de Brousse y figure à titre de renseignements complémentaires.

Au point de vue de construction et exploitation, la ligne Brousse–Panderma se trouve être dans les mêmes conditions, sous tous les rapports, que la première partie de la ligne Panderma–Soma, c'est-à-dire Panderma–Balikesser.

En conséquence pour l'ensemble du projet tel que le comporte la Concession accordée, il faut s'en tenir aux études ci-jointes.

Au reste, le concessionnaire s'engage à construire l'ensemble du réseau au moyen d'une régie cointéressée, à un prix maximum de 75,000 fr. par kilom., les économies sur ce prix devant être partagées par moitié entre la Société et le constructeur.

Dans ce prix kilométrique sont comprises toutes les dépenses de construction et fournitures sauf le matériel roulant, qui lui-même doit être évalué à 10,000 fr. ou 12,000 fr. par kilom. au grand maximum.

Le matériel de luxe sera très restreint et les vitesses obligatoires pour certains trains-poste ne devront pas dépasser 35 kilom. à l'heure. Donc, la dépense totale kilométrique sera de 85,000 fr. à 88,000 fr., à laquelle il y aura à ajouter l'apport du concessionnaire et les frais de constitution de capital.

Par suite de la construction de la ligne Brousse–Panderma, les recettes prévues à l'étude du projet pour la ligne Panderma–Soma vont augmenter assez sensiblement, et surtout les recettes du port de Panderma.

En résumé, actuellement le projet primitif ayant subi les modifications énoncées ci-dessus devient le suivant:—

	Kilom.
Lignes principales	300
Embranchements	65
Total	365

	Fr.
Construction du chemin de fer, 365 kilom., 88,000 fr. par kilom. ..	32,120,000
Construction du port	3,500,000
Total des frais d'établissement du chemin de fer et du port ..	35,620,000
Apport du concessionnaire et frais de constitution du capital, en chiffres ronds	4,380,000
Total du capital émis, environ	40,000,000

Exploitation du Chemin de Fer.

D'après les études sérieusement faites, la recette brute par kilomètre de la totalité du réseau est une moyenne de 11,500 fr.

Cette recette est actuellement acquise par le seul trafic existant sans compte de l'avenir.

Donc la recette totale pour le réseau de 365 kilom. sera de 4,197,500 fr.

Quant aux frais d'exploitation, basés sur des chemins de fer à peu près analogues en Turquie, ils seront par kilom. de 4,000 fr., soit pour 365 kilom. un total de 1,460,000 fr.

L'exploitation de cette ligne sera très facile; en outre le service de voyageurs ne sera nullement un service de luxe, mais plutôt un service mixte, les gros ouvrages d'art faisant défaut sur ce réseau; le service de l'entretien sera très peu onéreux.

Bien entendu, ces 4,000 fr. de frais par kilom. sont basés sur les 11,500 fr. de recettes brutes.

Exploitation du Port.

Quant au port, la recette brute sans les apports de la ligne Brousse–Panderma est déjà acquise par le trafic actuel à 150,000 fr., en appelant même que pour attirer davantage de trafic, on veuille réduire les taxes au minimum, et par conséquent réduire ce total au minimum extrême. Dans ce cas, il faut porter ce total des recettes à 500,000 fr. avec les apports de la ligne de Brousse.

L'exploitation de ce port construit d'une façon pratique coûtera peu de chose; l'entretien sera très insignifiant, car il ne s'appliquera qu'à une grande jetée et au matériel.

Les frais d'exploitation seront de 150,000 fr. ; il restera donc un bénéfice assuré de 350,000 fr.

Exploitation générale.

	Fr.
Recette brute, totale du chemin de fer	4,197,500
" " port	500,000
Total	4,697,500
Frais d'exploitation du chemin de fer	1,460,000
" " port	150,000
Total	1,610,000
Bénéfice du chemin de fer	2,737,500
" port	350,000
Total	3,087,500

Rémunération du Capital.

	Fr.
Capital émis	40,000,000
Divisés en—	
Capital actions	12,000,000
" obligations	28,000,000

En appliquant 6 pour cent de rémunération, pris sur les bénéfices acquis, indiqués ci-dessus, au capital obligations, on obtient un total de 1,680,000 fr. à diminuer de 3,087,500 fr., total des bénéfices. Il reste donc pour les 12,000,000 fr. du capital actions un bénéfice de 1,407,500 fr., ce qui fait donc une rémunération de 11·72 pour cent.

Donc, cette affaire se présente dès le début dans des conditions excellentes, car ce résultat est déjà assuré par le trafic existant réellement ; mais il est incontestable que, même au début de l'exploitation, ce trafic augmentera considérablement, et étant donné la situation non seulement stratégique au point de vue militaire, mais aussi au point de vue commercial, de ce réseau ferré, et en tenant compte de la marche régulière et normale d'une exploitation de chemin de fer dans des régions analogues, il est incontestable qu'on peut d'ores et déjà être assuré d'une augmentation progressive du trafic, augmentation qui, au bout des cinq premières années, atteindra certainement un tiers en plus, ce qui donnera donc au capital actions une rémunération de 18 pour cent au moins.

En escomptant seulement une augmentation d'un tiers en plus dans les trafics au bout des cinq premières années, c'est un chiffre modeste, car, grâce à l'exploitation du port et de l'échelle de Panderma, qui est destiné à devenir le véritable entrepôt d'une grande partie, et de la partie la plus riche de l'Asie Mineure, il est évident que ce chemin de fer assurera au capital actions une rémunération énorme, et cela avant peu de temps.

Avantages matériels accordés à la Concession.

1. Durée de la Concession : quatre-vingt-dix-neuf années.

2. Terrains appartenant à l'État sont donnés gratuitement par l'État pour l'établissement du chemin de fer et de ses dépendances.

3. Le matériel et les matériaux, fers, houilles, machines, et autres nécessaires au premier établissement du chemin de fer et de ses dépendances que le concessionnaire achètera dans l'Empire ou qu'il fera venir de l'étranger, seront exempts de tous droits de douane ; de même le sol, fonds et revenus de chemin de fer ne seront passibles d'aucun impôt.

4. Il ne sera perçu aucun droit de timbre sur les actions et obligations à émettre pour la constitution des capitaux nécessaires à la réalisation de la Concession.

5. La franchise douanière est accordée pendant les quinze premières années de l'exploitation pour les charbons à transporter de l'étranger.

6. Les bois et charpentes nécessaires à la construction et l'exploitation du chemin de fer ainsi qu'à son entretien, pourront être coupés gratuitement dans les forêts voisines appartenant à l'État, conformément au règlement y relatif. (La question des traverses est très importante, car ce sera une économie énorme.)

7. Le concessionnaire pourra exploiter les mines qu'il aura découvertes dans un rayon de 20 kilom. de chaque côté de la voie en se conformant aux lois et règlements y relatifs. (Toute la région traversée par les chemins de fer en projet est d'une très grande richesse en mines diverses.)

En outre du projet ci-dessus, pour compléter une exploitation parfaite du chemin de fer et du port, il sera très utile d'établir un service journalier maritime entre Constantinople et Panderma. Le trafic entre ces deux ports est très important, et ce service sera très largement rémunéré. Il permettra en outre d'effectuer le trajet de Constantinople à Smyrne dans une journée.

De Smyrne à Panderma la distance sera de 360 kilom. De Constantinople à Panderma elle est de 90 kilom.

Comme conclusion il ressort très nettement que la mise en œuvre de la Concession du Port de Panderma et du réseau ferré dont il vient d'être parlé, est une excellente affaire sous tous les rapports, et que le capital qui y sera engagé aura une rémunération largement assurée et préférable à une garantie kilométrique, que le Gouvernement Ottoman peut, à un moment donné, se trouver dans l'impossibilité absolue de payer s'il y avait lieu, ce qui arrive déjà avec certaines lignes.

Du reste, cette région est la plus riche de l'Asie Mineure. Toutes les exploitations agricoles, minières, industrielles, &c., y seront très développées, et un grand avenir est réservé à cette région, le jour où elle aura des moyens de communication assurés pour le transport de ses produits.

Note supplémentaire.

Le réseau ferré en projet est destiné à desservir la contrée certainement la plus riche de l'Asie Mineure, et celle qui donne par kilomètre carré le plus de produits (de produits divers).

En outre, aucune autre région de l'Asie Mineure ne produit autant de minerais divers et n'en exploite autant.

De plus, aucune des lignes en exploitation en Asie Mineure n'a l'importance commerciale de la ligne Panderma–Soma, destinée à relier Smyrne à Constantinople par le trajet le plus court et le plus direct.

Parmi les lignes à peu près analogues en Asie Mineure, mais n'ayant pas l'importance stratégique et commerciale de la ligne Panderma–Soma, et ne traversant pas des contrées fournissant autant de produits, il faut citer :

Smyrne-Magnésie Soma et Magnésie Alachéhir, formant ce qu'on appelle l'ancien Cassaba, d'une longueur totale de 256 kilom. en exploitation depuis très longtemps. Ce réseau ne possède pas de garantie kilométrique. Ses recettes brutes moyennes varient suivant l'abondance des récoltes entre 11,000 fr. et 17,000 fr. par kilomètre.

Le maximum de recettes brutes kilométriques atteint par ce réseau a été de 21,860 fr.

C'est à ce réseau que doit être relié à Soma la ligne Panderma-Soma.

L'Aidin Railway, appartenant à une Société Anglaise, formant un réseau de 516 kilom., dont la ligne principale est Smyrne Aidin-Dinear, traversant une contrée essentiellement et seulement agricole, mais moins riche assurément que le Karassi, traversé par le Panderma Soma, ne possède non plus aucune garantie, et cependant ses recettes brutes kilométriques se sont toujours maintenues dans une moyenne de 11,000 fr. à 12,000 fr., le maximum a été de 16,000 fr.

Parmi les lignes ayant une garantie kilométrique, mais avec une formule telle que la Société a tout intérêt à empêcher le développement de son exploitation afin d'éviter les frais et par conséquent obtenir un bénéfice plus important, il faut citer la ligne Allemande Haidar Pacha à Angora, d'une longueur de 577 kilom. Malgré tous les efforts de la Société pour empêcher le développement de l'exploitation, la recette brute moyenne par kilomètre est de 10,800 fr., avec un maximum qui atteint 17,000 à 18,000 fr. Si cette ligne n'avait pas de garantie, sa recette brute moyenne atteindrait certainement 15,000 fr.

Dans toutes les recettes dont il vient d'être parlé, ne sont pas compris les transports militaires donnant également un chiffre important de recettes.

Le coût moyen kilométrique de ces chemins de fer construits et exploités est d'environ 185,000 fr. (capital nominal).

Ces lignes traversent, il est vrai, sur presque toute la longueur de leurs parcours des régions d'accès difficile au point de vue des travaux et approvisionnement de matériaux, et de plus, elles ont été les premières construites en Asie Mineure.

En outre, ces lignes ont été construites par des Sociétés dont l'organisation financière était telle qu'elle ne leur permettait pas des bénéfices totaux inférieurs à 40, 50, et même 60 pour cent, sans que ces chiffres puissent paraître exagérés ; bénéfices à partager entre les concessionnaires et leurs associés, les Syndicats financiers et leurs promoteurs, les entrepreneurs généraux, et leurs sous-entrepreneurs, les grands fournisseurs du matériel, &c.

Pour la construction et la mise en exploitation du réseau Panderma, il faudra donc profiter de l'expérience acquise par l'étude de la défectuosité des moyens employés pour les lignes dont il vient d'être parlé.

La moyenne maxima kilométrique de dépenses d'exploitation de ces lignes ci-dessus désignées est de 4,000 fr.

(Signé) BELLET DE LOBEL.

Constantinople, 1901.

[17112] No. 66.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 27.)

(No. 297.)

Sir, *Constantinople, May 22, 1907.*

WITH reference to my despatches Nos. 238 and 278 of the 22nd ultimo and 14th instant, respectively, relative to the mission of the German traveller, Dr. Hugo Grothe, to Mesopotamia, I have the honour to transmit, herewith, an extract from the Report of the British Consular Agent at Mosul to His Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad, respecting the arrival and proceedings of this gentleman at the former place.

It would appear that Dr. Grothe is greatly interested in the introduction of oil pumps for irrigation purposes into Mesopotamia and used his best efforts to induce the population of Mosul to order some German pumps, as well as German agricultural machinery.

His Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad had frequently reported direct to the Board of Trade and through this Embassy to the Foreign Office, the demand there is for such oil pumps at Bagdad and in the surrounding districts and has dwelt on the opportunities which might be opened to British trade, were a smart agent, assisted by one or more skilled mechanics, sent out by some influential British firm to introduce a suitable class of pump into the country.

I hope that some British manufacturer will think it worth while to do this and forestall German competition in what may prove in the future to be a very valuable branch of trade.

In a subsequent despatch, Major Ramsay reports Dr. Grothe's arrival at Bagdad from Mosul. He describes himself as a geographer and ethnographist.

He appears to have travelled considerably in the north of Africa and in the north of Turkey in Asia. It seems that he has lately been making an extended tour in the Anti-Taurus mountains, and that his intention is to visit the Bakhtiari country as soon as he leaves Bagdad.

Dr. Grothe further informed Major Ramsay that he had visited Ibrahim Pasha, the well-known Hamidieh Chief, at Deir on the Euphrates.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 66.

Nimrod Rassam to Consul-General Newmarch.

(No. 13.)

(Translation.)

(Extract.) *Mosul, April 4, 1907.*

IN continuation of my letter No. 9 dated the 28th ultimo, I have the honour to report that the German traveller who has recently come to Mosul is one of the members of the German Board of Trade and Agriculture. His name is Dr. Hugo Grothe. He has inquired into all the goods that are imported and exported from Mosul. His sole idea is to induce the people to import agricultural instruments and oil pumps for the irrigation of lands and gardens. It appears, according to rumours, that he has written

to one of the German firms asking them to send a pump with an engineer to work it, so that if any opening could be secured a great number would be imported. The people do not venture to order these machines without experience of them and for fear of breakdowns. But if an engineer would come and the machine prove to draw enough water, then the people would be willing to import probably over 400 for Mosul and its neighbourhood, not taking into account the Levas, the Kazas, and the Nahias.

[17483] No. 67.

Extract of Letter by the General Manager of the Smyrna-Aiden Railway.—(Communicated by Lord Rathmore, May 29.)

May 18, 1907.

BRIGANDAGE. I regret to say that M. Van Heemstra, a Dutch subject and son-in-law to Mr. Richard Whittall, has been taken off by brigands at Djumovassi. He owns some properties at Djumovassi and Tourbali which he farms himself, and has been gradually introducing European methods of farming there.

Continued acts of brigandage have rendered the country so unsafe that owners of property among Turks and Rayahs have to a large extent come to live in Smyrna, but the present is the first case for many years where a European has been taken in our district.

This state of affairs is extremely prejudicial to the Company's interests, and I find it is the opinion among all classes except the official Turk that conditions generally under which we work here are steadily tending from bad to worse.

[17603] No. 68.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 30.)

(No. 71.)

(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, May 30, 1907.*

HIS Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van reports that the vilayet is tranquil and that the condition of affairs and the Vali's conduct have greatly improved as a result of my efforts.

For the information of the Grand Vizier, Captain Dickson is forwarding proof of illegal action on the part of the authorities by post.

[17997] No. 69.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 3.)

(No. 304.)

Sir, *Constantinople, May 27, 1907.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 270 of the 7th instant, I have the honour to forward herewith a communication from the Sublime Porte, giving the official version of the engagement between Turkish troops and Armenian revolutionaries at the monastery of Akhtamar, in the Vilayet of Van.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 69.

Note by Sublime Porte.—(Communicated to British, French, and Russian Embassies, May 23, 1907.)

UN détachement militaire embarqué dans les caïques fut expédié le 17 (30) Avril, 1907, pour capturer les agitateurs Arméniens qui s'étaient fortifiés dans l'île d'Akhtamar. S'étant approché du rivage, le détachement fut accueilli par des coups de fusil, qui blessèrent deux soldats.

La troupe expéditionnaire renouvela sa tentative le lendemain, et malgré la résistance des perturbateurs qui tiraient sur elle comme la veille, réussit à débarquer dans l'île. Mais n'ayant pu, à cause de l'approche de la nuit et de l'escarpement du lieu,

attaquer immédiatement les brigands, ceux-ci parvinrent, à la faveur de l'obscurité, à s'échapper sur des barques, par le versant opposé de l'île.

Cependant, les bandits avaient pris soin avant leur départ de briser une croix, d'enlever divers objets pieux de l'église et de les disperser sur différents points de l'île. Il est manifeste qu'en agissant ainsi leur but a été d'imputer ces actes aux troupes Impériales et de fournir matière à des accusations contre elles.

Or, il est établi de fait, que lors de l'entrée des soldats Ottomans dans l'île il a été dressé un procès-verbal en règle constatant que les dits objets ont été dispersés par les perturbateurs en question et qu'ils ont été recueillis et remis intégralement aux prêtres Arméniens par les soldats.

Le détachement militaire est retourné à Van le 21 Avril, 1322, muni de divers procès-verbaux contre-signés par le prêtre et les desservants de l'Église Arménienne.

Il appert clairement de ces documents officiels qu'avant l'entrée des soldats Impériaux dans l'Ile d'Akhtamar, le dit prêtre ayant essayé d'adresser quelques sages exhortations aux agitateurs qui voulaient disperser les objets pieux et briser la croix, ceux-ci n'en tinrent aucun compte et lui répondirent qu'il fallait agir ainsi pour discréditer les soldats.

Cette réponse prouve surabondamment l'intention malveillante qui a dicté la conduite criminelle des bandits et suffit à elle seule pour édifier sur la valeur des imputations auxquelles nos détracteurs ne manqueraient pas de se porter contre nous en prenant texte du récit dénaturé de l'incident dont il s'agit.

Les autorités militaires ont été mises en possession du dossier de l'affaire et procèdent incessamment à la recherche des individus qui recèlent les agitateurs en question.

[18007] No. 70.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 3.)

(No. 314.)

Sir, *Constantinople, May 28, 1907.*

I HAVE forwarded to His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, for his observations, the telegram respecting the Armenian population of the Province of Van which was inclosed in your despatch No. 185 of the 21st instant.

In his Report for the quarter ended the 31st March last, Captain Dickson informed me that the Vali was acting with severity, but apparently not illegally, and was doing his best in difficult circumstances to replenish an empty Treasury.

Captain Dickson and his French colleague have both spoken to the Vali, and their representations seemed to have had the effect of producing rather more leniency in the collection of taxes, and the Vali was ready to abandon the practice of allowing the Zaptiehs engaged in tax-gathering to live on the people.

The Vali was also intending to collect taxes more regularly from the Kurds.

When Captain Dickson next wrote, which was on the 28th ultimo, he reported that the Vali was collecting arrears of taxes with great severity and in a quite illegal manner, as the arrears for several years were collected at once; in many cases oxen for ploughing, seed, corn, beds, cooking utensils, etc., had been sold, and in some places fruit-trees cut down and sold.

His Reports therefore bear out some of the statements made in the telegram addressed to the Droschak, although he does not allude to the personal outrages there mentioned.

I drew the Grand Vizier's attention to Captain Dickson's Reports, a précis of which I caused to be communicated to his Highness, and was assured that an inquiry would be made and the result communicated to me, while in the meantime the Vali would be instructed by telegraph to be moderate in his collection of arrears and to be careful not to exceed the stipulations of the Regulations respecting collection of arrears of taxes, and not in any case to proceed in such a manner as to impoverish the people.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

[18009] No. 71.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 3.)

(No. 316.)

Sir, *Constantinople, May 28, 1907.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 42 of the 17th March, I have the honour to report that Representatives of the Negus of Abyssinia have recently again visited Constantinople with a view to reopening the discussion as the ownership of the Deir-us-Sultan Monastery.

They were, however, refused an audience at the Palace, and though they appear to have paid a visit to the Porte they were clearly and emphatically informed by the Grand Vizier that the question had been finally disposed of last year and could not possibly be reopened, even if they were qualified to treat, as to which he had no information.

The Abyssinian Representatives accordingly left after a very short stay in this city.

I am sending a copy of this despatch to Sir Eldon Gorst.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

[18078] No. 72.

Mr. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 3.)

(No. 56.)

Sir, *Munich, June 1, 1907.*

A LITTLE while ago Sir Frank Lascelles asked me whether I could procure for him some information with regard to a certain Dr. Hugo Grothe, of Munich, who was reported to be travelling about in the neighbourhood of Bagdad, and who was suspected of being engaged in prospecting for petroleum. The information which I was able to procure for Sir Frank Lascelles was of a very meagre character, as nearly every inquiry I made of Germans with regard to a subject touching Bagdad was met by evasive replies, but I now note in the "Frankfort Gazette" of a few days ago some information respecting this gentleman and his movements which if may be worth while to report to you.

This newspaper says that Dr. Grothe left in July last for Asia Minor, and that he was sent there on a mission, but by whom the paper does not state. The Doctor, after visiting many places in Asia Minor, reached Bagdad by way of Urfa. He is reported to have been very well received by Ibrahim Pasha, who is described as the powerful and intelligent Chief of a tribe of the Kurds ("Millikurden"), and to have spent a certain time in his camp. Dr. Grothe, with the assistance of Ibraham Pasha, and accompanied by one of his trusted men, followed the route from Harràn to the Abdulasis Range, passing through difficult country, which it is said has not yet been visited by Europeans. The "Frankfort Gazette" asserts that, from the reports received from Dr. Grothe, the plains of Harràn, through which the Bagdad Railway will eventually pass, will become—when the line is constructed—the granary of that part of the world. Most glowing reports are also given by that gentleman as to the prospects of Mesopotamia when the Bagdad Railway shall have been constructed, and when agriculture again begins to get the upper hand over nomadic life.

Dr. Grothe reports very favourably as regards German activity in those parts, and he states that he found 25 German settlers at Marash, 18 at Aleppo, 17 at Urfa, 30 at Meserch, near Kharput, 14 at Bagdad, 5 at Diarbekir, 2 at Mush, 4 at Wan, 4 at Mossul, 4 at Assur, 4 at Babylon, and 3 at Bussorah. At Marash, Urfa, and Diarbekir there appear to be German hospitals with German doctors, who do a great deal of good work, especially among the Mussulman population. Dr. Grothe points out the necessity of also establishing German hospitals at Mossul and Bagdad, as they would greatly help to spread German influence in those regions; as yet Germany's influence cannot be compared to that exercised by certain other foreign nations. If the German Bagdad Railway scheme is to become a real means for placing German influence in a dominant position in Asia Minor, she must exert herself more than she has done of late, as other nations are ahead of her already, and will do all in their power to resist the advance of German influence; already the United States, France, and Great Britain exert widespread influence through their missions and schools in the Bagdad district, and in Asia Minor generally. At Mossul, Bagdad, and Bussorah the French Dominicans

and Carmelites are struggling hard to maintain the supremacy of French among the foreign languages spoken by the native population. Every year these monks teach their language to at least 500 children, and when one considers that this has been going on for many years, one cannot help recognizing that this process must have a considerable political influence in that part of the world. Germany suffers from want of money to propagate her language, and she cannot compete with American, British, and French Missionary Societies, who are continually receiving large legacies from pious benefactors. Dr. Grothe adds that another weapon of French influence in Bagdad is the "Alliance Israélite," who have brought up some 50,000 to 60,000 Jewish children in the Bagdad district in the knowledge of the French language.

The Doctor reports that the establishment of a German line of steamers to the Persian Gulf and to Bussorah has proved of great advantage to German trade in those parts, and he shows how inadequate is the present steamer traffic on the Tigris for coping with the growing trade in Mesopotamia. It would almost seem as if he intended to suggest that Germany should use her commanding position at Constantinople to endeavour to obtain a concession for herself to run steamers on the Tigris in the general interests of trade, and he notes that the Turkish officials at Bagdad are most friendlily disposed towards Germany, and desirous of increasing the prosperity of those provinces.

The "Frankfort Gazette" asserts that Dr. Grothe will travel through the southern parts of Persia, and finally find his way to Tehran, but no allusion is made to his being the representative of any German firms interested in the petroleum trade, or that he is on his own initiative prospecting for oil.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT

[19001] No. 73.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 10.)

(No. 327.)
Sir, *Constantinople, June 4, 1907.*

I HAVE the honour to report that, according to news which has reached me, and which is now circulating in the city, heavy fighting has recently taken place in the Yemen, and a force of six battalions of Turkish regular troops, under the command of Youssouf Pasha, have been badly beaten by the insurgents. The troops are said to have fled to Sanaa, where they mutinied, and last night a rumour was current at the Ministry of War that Sanaa had been taken.

Ziver Bey, Vali of Trebizond, has, according to the same report, received urgent orders to come to Constantinople with a view to his being sent to the Yemen.

The fact of Ziver Bey having received such orders has also been reported by the Acting British Consul at Trebizond, who stated that the Vali would leave on the 1st instant, and that it was supposed that he was to be given office at Constantinople.

The Porte, however, and even the Grand Vizier, disclaimed any knowledge of Ziver Bey's destination.

I have, &c.
(Signed) *N.* R. O'CONOR.

[19002] No. 74.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 10.)

(No. 328.)
Sir, *Constantinople, June 4, 1907.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 522, Confidential, of the 31st July of last year, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul-General at Smyrna, and of its inclosures, on the subject of the continuance of brigandage in the Vilayet of Aidin.

Mr. Cumberbatch incloses copy of an identical report which has been addressed by all the Members of the Consular Corps at Smyrna to their respective Missions at Constantinople, indicating the special measures which, in their opinion, are necessary to exterminate the evil. He also incloses a copy of a Memorandum communicated confidentially by the Manager of the Smyrna-Aidin Railway, showing the number of cases of brigandage which have occurred during the past and the present year in the

neighbourhood of the railway. The most important of these is the recent capture of a Dutch subject at only an hour's distance by rail from Smyrna, who was detained by the brigands until a ransom of 6,000*l.* was paid by his friends and relatives in Smyrna.

I caused the purport of Mr. Cumberbatch's despatch to be communicated on the 1st instant to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and to the Grand Vizier. I found that they were already in possession, through the Vali, of the recommendations made by the Consular Corps in Smyrna, and the Grand Vizier stated that the necessity for taking some special measures for the repression of brigandage in that district had again, for some days past, formed the subject of serious deliberation, as a result of which it had been decided to call out 600 men of the "Ihtiat" or first-class reserves, who would be specially told off for this service. Two steamers, one of which had been borrowed from the Tobacco Régie, would be used to patrol the coast, and strict injunctions were being sent to the Vali to take efficient steps to put an end to the state of things complained of in concert with the military and naval authorities.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 74.

Consul-General Cumberbatch to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 24.)
Sir, *Smyrna, May 28, 1907.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 52 of the 19th July, 1906, on the subject of brigandage in Smyrna district, I have the honour to forward herewith copy of an identical Report which is being addressed by all the Members of the Consular Corps at Smyrna to their respective Missions at Constantinople.

For your Excellency's further information I beg leave to inclose copy of a report which has been confidentially furnished by Mr. Barfield to show the cases of brigandage that have occurred in the immediate vicinity of the Smyrna-Aidin Railway alone since the date of my last report. This list by no means represents the total number of cases, many of which are never heard of at Smyrna; but it is sufficient to show that practically little or no headway has been made in the repression of the bands of brigands.

At the present moment, in addition to the band of the notorious Chief, Tchakirdji Mehmet, in the vicinity of Melas, whence new stories of his daring exploits reach Smyrna almost daily, there is a band close by in the mountains overlooking the village of Bonmatort where the greatest uneasiness consequently exists, and another band was reported last week as having landed in the neighbourhood of Scala Nuova, and was last heard of in the vicinity of Sokia.

From Dikili too news has recently arrived of a band of brigands in the Pergamos district, which has always been one of their favourite hunting grounds.

I beg leave to add that, as Doyen of the Consular Corps, I am to-day informing the Governor-General of the contents of our identical report, and I shall urge upon his Excellency the necessity of immediate precautions against a descent upon either Bonmatort or Bondjah, where most of the leading British residents live.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. A. CUMBERBATCH.

Inclosure 2 in No. 74.

Identic Report on State of Insecurity in the Aidin Vilayet.

LES Représentants des Puissances étrangères à Smyrne se voient dans la nécessité d'appeler l'attention de leurs Missions respectives sur l'état d'insécurité de ce vilayet.

Cette situation semble en effet présenter aujourd'hui de plus grands dangers que par le passé.

Le fameux chef de bande Tchakirdji n'a pu être arrêté jusqu'à présent, malgré les mesures spéciales prises contre lui. Il est toujours intrépide et terrorise les populations. D'après des informations de bonne source, de nouvelles bandes se forment actuellement, dont quelques-unes aux portes de la ville. Mais un fait surtout

émotionné ces derniers jours les colonies étrangères. Depuis quelques années les étrangers n'avaient été aucunement inquiétés par les brigands, mais il y a environ une semaine une bande composée non pas des éléments habituels des montagnes, mais de mauvais garnements de la ville même et des alentours, a capturé un sujet Hollandais aux environs de ses propriétés à une heure du Chemin de Fer de Smyrne et l'a emmené sur la montagne. Peu s'en est fallu que le Consul d'Amérique, qui avait été ce jour-là dans le même endroit pour des affaires, n'ait été également enlevé. A la suite des pourparlers, engagés directement avec les brigands par la famille du capturé, celui-ci a été relâché après paiement de la somme intégrale demandée pour sa rançon, soit £ T. 6,000.

Ces faits semblent démontrer que les mesures prises jusqu'à présent ne sont pas suffisantes, et que des mesures bien plus énergiques et générales s'imposent pour délivrer le pays d'une plaie qui trouble profondément son existence et empêche le développement de ses richesses.

Les membres du Corps Consulaire de Smyrne expriment l'avis unanime que des mesures exceptionnelles très rigoureuses devraient être prises pour en rayer le mal, et ils prennent la liberté d'indiquer les dispositions suivantes, dont l'adoption leur paraît exigée par les circonstances :—

1. Envoi d'un Général d'une capacité et d'une autorité également incontestées, qui, conformément au précédent de la mission confiée vers l'année 1890 à Edib Pacha dans le district d'Andrinople, prendrait sur lui toute la responsabilité du service de répression et agirait d'une façon tout à fait indépendante des autorités civiles et militaires du vilayet. Ce Général devrait disposer de forces militaires au moins doubles de celles qui sont maintenant, dans le même but, sous les ordres du Général Hulki Pacha, et avoir les pouvoirs nécessaires pour décréter les mesures les plus amples, y compris la proclamation de la loi martiale dans les districts où il le jugerait opportune.

2. Maintien de la responsabilité du Gouvernement Ottoman pour le prompt paiement des rançons toutes les fois qu'un étranger serait capturé, y compris le cas tout récent du sujet Hollandais susmentionné.

3. Renonciation au système de l'amnistie dont on a trop abusé par le passé. Par contre, mise à prix de la tête de chaque brigand dans une mesure proportionnée aux rançons qu'il exige, et publication expresse que le paiement du prix est garanti par la Banque Impériale Ottomane.

Les membres du Corps Consulaire de Smyrne prient leurs Missions respectives de vouloir bien, en appelant l'attention du Gouvernement Impérial sur ce qui précède, lui recommander l'adoption des mesures ci-dessus mentionnées. Ils saisissent, en même temps, cette occasion pour recommander que les mesures pour la réorganisation de la gendarmerie du vilayet soient hâtées et complétées autant que possible.

Smyrne, le 27 Mai, 1907.

Inclosure 3 in No. 74.

Report by Mr. Barfield.

Djemorassi.

May 10, 1907.—Mr. van Hemstra was carried to the mountains by a band of six brigands. (Released on the 23rd May on payment of ransom of £ T. 6,000.)

Tourbali.

September 1906.—Djemal Bey was carried to the mountains by brigands under Arnaut Ramazan. They asked a ransom of 500 liras; as this was not forthcoming they murdered him.

Two gangs of brigands murdered a peasant of Soubashi, village of the Imperial farms.

October.—Kodja Hemet murdered two peasants of Karakizlar.

Two gangs of brigands murdered three peasants of Soubashi, village of the Imperial farms.

Odemish.

August 1906.—Indje Mehmet who had given the oath of submission, but continued to commit crimes, was killed at Bodemia with four of his followers by a body of soldiers. Officer Ismail Agha was also killed, and another officer wounded.

Brigand Kavali killed Sechoglou and ransomed Hadji Ousein.

September.—Kavali murdered three peasants of Keles.

October.—Kavali murdered one woman of Keles.

Chakirdji Mehmet murdered eighteen peasants of Keles.

Kavali ransomed for £ T. 300 Mafaza's son at Keles.

January 1907.—Kavali killed six peasants at Isaila.

Chakirdji Mehmet murdered four members of a family, and he killed one of the gendarmes who were pursuing him.

March.—Chakirdji Mehmet murdered six persons.

Karatounar.

September 1906.—A band of brigands carried away the child of Ali Bey of the village of Omarbeyli and obliged him to pay a ransom of £ T. 1,000.

Same band at the same place carried away Djandji Ali and obliged him to pay a ranson of £ T. 200.

December.—Albali brigand forced a house of Timindjiler village and murdered a man and wounded a woman.

Seven brigands murdered a man at Koudousli village.

Four brigands forced the door of a mill at Omarbeyli, robbed the money and clothing they found, and wounded the owner. Four other brigands forced the door of another mill at the same place, robbed everything they found, wounded the owner, and murdered his assistant.

Heybeyli Sut, two Turks forced the door of the station-porter's room and threatened his family.

At Lobasi village there was a brigand named Ayan who robbed all passengers going on foot to Cotzarli.

Aidin.

November 1906.—Chakirdji Mehmet encountered thirty gendarmes and some villagers. Killed three gendarmes and five villagers.

Brigand Chalik Houssein was besieged in a house; he managed to kill two and wounded three men of the Imperial troops.

Kiosk.

September 1906.—Seven brigands were to surrender; arriving at the Konak, they were asked to give up their rifles. They refused, fired a volley, shot a coldji and wounded a Tchaoush.

October.—Thieves forced a house of a certain Hajji Moustafa and robbed him.

March 1907.—Brigands ransomed for 20 liras a certain Codja Ahim. Two days after the same brigands ransomed different peasants and took £ T. 100.

April.—Chakirdji Mehmet murdered three peasants and burnt a house; two days after he met with soldiers and shot one and wounded two of them; one of the brigands was also wounded.

Nazli.

September 1906.—L. Meinaroglou and his brother were captured by brigands from Horsourlu Stu; the brother was released after ten minutes. They too from L. Meinaroglou as ransom £ T. 300.

April 1907.—Chakirdji Mehmet killed at Sinexiler village two women and wounded a man.

May.—Brigands (thieves) entered the house of A. Meinarglou at Nazli and stole £ T. 350 and jewels.

Brigands carried from Tabak Deré a rich Turk. He is still with them as he has not yet paid the £ T. 600 they asked as ransom.

[19765] No. 75.

Telegraphic Message from Russian Government to Count Benckendorff.—(Communicated by Count Benckendorff, June 15, 1907.)

EN vue d'état de choses troublé et inquiétant dans les localités Turques avoisinant le Caucase, il nous paraîtrait utile que situation soit étudiée par Consuls d'Angleterre et de France, d'Erzeroum, Bitlis, et Van, conjointement avec les nôtres. Le Gouvernement Impérial serait très reconnaissant au Gouvernement Britannique si l'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre à Constantinople était muni d'instructions à cet effet.

[19797] No. 76.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 15.)

(No. 74.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, June 15, 1907.*

I HAVE received the following telegraphic information from the Consular officer at Hodeidah to-day :—

"The Director of Telegraphs at Sanaa has made an urgent appeal for British intervention owing to 100 mutinous officers having seized the telegraph office; the latter have telegraphed their grievances to the Sultan during the past five weeks, but their messages have been suppressed. It would be greatly in the interests of Turkey if the existing state of affairs were brought to the Sultan's knowledge, as a serious crisis is apprehended."

I propose to inform the Sultan.

A deputation of influential Sheikhs, I believe, arrived here yesterday from Yemen to try to come to some practical settlement with the Ottoman Government.

(Confidential.)

On Wednesday His Majesty sent Ghalib Pasha to ask my private advice as to what course should be taken in regard to Yemen.

In reply I said that in view of the insufficient knowledge in my possession it was difficult to give an opinion, but that now affairs seemed to have reached such a pass there that I thought that unless His Majesty granted at least administrative autonomy the country might be lost, as he was not in a position either to support the continual drain on the financial resources of the Empire or to send reinforcements.

[19765] No. 77.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 63.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, June 19, 1907.*

RUSSIAN Minister for Foreign Affairs has communicated to me, through Count Benckendorff, following message :—

"In view of troubled and disquieting state of affairs in Turkish districts bordering on Caucasus, we consider that it would be of advantage that the situation should be examined by British and French Consuls at Erzeroum, Bitlis, and Van acting in concert with their Russian colleagues. The Imperial Government would be grateful to His Majesty's Government if the British Ambassador at Constantinople might receive instructions in this sense."

With regard to desire of Russian Government to instruct Consuls, I should be glad to learn your views as to expediency of the suggestion.

[20503] No. 78.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received June 21.)

Sir, *India Office, June 19, 1907.*

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated the 8th ultimo, on the subject of the interpretation furnished by the French Government of the stipulation in their Memorandum of the 8th November as to Omanis in French service, and to inclose, for the information of Secretary Sir E. Grey, a copy of telegrams to and from the Government of India, from which it will be seen that they are of opinion that the interpretation proposed by the French Government may be accepted as satisfactory.

Mr. Morley concurs in this view, on the assumption that natives navigating dhows entitled to fly the French flag under this special Agreement will not have other privileges than those conceded to masters and crews of dhows entitled under the Award to fly the French flag, unless they come under the category of persons "actually in the service of the French," referred to in Article IV of the French Treaty with Muscat of 1844.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 78.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P. *India Office, May 14, 1907.*

MUSCAT arbitration.

Following is substance of interpretation of stipulation in French Memorandum of the 8th November as to Omanis in their service, furnished by the French Government. (See your telegram of the 20th January and letter from Foreign Office of the 12th March) :—

"While the French Government does not claim the right to grant in future to Oman natives, even if they be in the service of a French resident, authorization to fly the French flag on dhows that are the personal property of such natives, any French resident in Muscat owning dhows will have the right of causing them to be navigated under the French flag, even if they are manned only by natives in his service."

Foreign Office are of opinion that this interpretation may be accepted as satisfactory, provided that it is formally accepted by the French Government. Please let me have your views by telegraph.

Inclosure 2 in No. 78.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P. *June 2, 1907.*

YOUR telegram dated the 14th May : Muscat Award.

We agree that we may accept as satisfactory the interpretation proposed by the French Government.

[20694] No. 79.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 23.)

(No. 78.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, June 23, 1907.*

MY telegram No. 72 of the 18th and your telegram No. 63 of the 19th instant : Disturbed state of Armenia.

Captain Dickson has been specially sent to Bitlis from Van (see my despatch No. 326 of the 9th instant), and my Russian colleague, with whom I have spoken, concurs with me in thinking that it might be sufficient if the Russian Consul at Bitlis were to confer with him.

Telegraphic instructions were sent to Captain Dickson by me on the 14th instant to act as far as possible in concert and confer freely with the Russian Consul.

I have informed French Chargé d'Affaires of the steps taken in concert with my Russian colleague, but there is no French Consul at Bitlis.

[20765] No. 80.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 24.)

(No. 354.)

Sir, *Therapia, June* 15, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 201 of the 29th ultimo and No. 218 of the 5th instant on the subject of German activity in Mesopotamia, and I will endeavour to ascertain the truth of the statements made in the extract from the "Standard" which you inclose.

I would venture to remind you that Major Ramsay, in the Confidential Memorandum inclosed in his despatch No. 51 of the 12th ultimo, which is transmitted herewith, states that "there seems to be little doubt that there will be a German bank in Bagdad before long. Dr. Gutman, of the Deutsche Orient Bank, is expected here in the course of the next three or four weeks."

Major Ramsay has since then reported that he hears the Germans are seeking for a Coal-Mines Concession in Persian territory east of Bagdad.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 80.

Memorandum by Major Ramsay.

(No. 6. Confidential.)

1. *Koweit.*—It is said here that Khalid, who is a son of Muhammad and a nephew of Sheikh Mubarek has been made a Pasha, that he is on very good terms with Sheikh Mubarek, from whom he has received £T. 8,000 and 200 camels. It is also said that the Sultan has sent presents to Mubarek and settled on him an allowance of £T. 150 a-month. Mubarek is said to have sent fifteen horses to the Sultan, but my informant could not tell me who had bought the presents nor by what road the horses had been sent.

2. *Dr. Grothe.*—A German named Dr. Hugo Grothe has been here for some time. He told me that he was an ethnographist and geographer, but I see that on his visiting card, which is printed in Turkish and English, he describes himself as a doctor of law and philosophy and General Secretary of the Munich Oriental Society. He has been travelling a good deal in Turkey and is now going to Pushti Kuh with the Vali of Pushti Kuh who is at Bagdad. In spite of Dr. Grothe's assertions to the contrary there is no doubt that he is engaged in making commercial inquiries, perhaps with special reference to agricultural questions and banking. When he passed through Mosul the Consular Agent there reported that he was a member of the German Board of Trade, and that he had written to Germany to induce a German manufacturer to send out pumps for irrigation. Several persons to whom Mr. Lloyd has applied for information have remarked that he seems to want all the same information that is asked for by Dr. Grothe.

I heard at Bagdad that Dr. Grothe had called on the local representative of the Sennive and tried to induce him to buy German pumps. This official is said to have telegraphed to Constantinople for orders, and to have received a reply that he was not at present to buy any German goods.

3. *English Education.*—Some weeks ago the Chief Rabbi told me that he hoped to open a new school for teaching English. He has recently sent me a message to tell me that he hears that there will be official opposition. If I were to attempt to press the matter I should do more harm than good, but I may be able to put in a word for English education when the Vali pays his promised visit to the Protestant school at Bagdad. The head of the Mission has been away for some time at Mosul.

4. *Russian Consul-General.*—The Russian Consul-General recently mentioned to me that he had made the acquaintance of Sheikh Humaidi, who is a son of Farhan Pasha, the Chief of the Jurbeh Shammar tribe, who live on the Tigris above Bagdad. I had just before heard that he had given a magazine rifle to Humaidi. M. Maschkoff,

the present Consul-General for Russia, is a man of curious character. He is the most sociable, generous, and hospitable man that I know. Consequently he has a large circle of acquaintances and gets much information. He is assisted by a Madame Dejasky, who lives at the Russian Consulate, and who is a very good linguist and fond of going into Mahommedan female society. M. Maschkoff ought to be a man of considerable influence in Bagdad, but I doubt if he is. He makes himself too cheap I think, and he has a violent temper which is likely to get him into trouble any day. It is nothing unusual for him to commit an assault in the street.

5. *Vali of Pushti Kuh.*—The Vali of Pushti Kuh has been to call on me. I believe that the other Consuls paid him the first call, but partly by luck and partly by good management on the part of Mr. Gaskin, he came to see me first. When I returned his call he was surrounded by people trying to sell him rubbish; among others, one man was trying to sell him spectacles. I said that the proper selection of glasses required skill and the use of instruments and lenses, and I promised to send the Residency Surgeon down the next day to test his eyes. The Vali seemed very pleased with the idea, and he was grateful when Captain McConochyre went to see him. I am ordering three pairs of glasses for the Vali, and shall in due course ask the Government of India to let me charge the cost to "Durbar presents." The Vali said that Dr. Grothe was going with him.

I mentioned to the Vali that the Government of India was sending two officers to Kermanshah to buy mules, and he said that there were plenty of good mules in Pushti Kuh and that if I would let him know when the officers arrived he would send men to escort the officers through his country from near Badra to Kermanshah, and also see that they saw a good collection of mules. The Vali appeared to be friendly. I took him over the Residency and showed him the Comet.

On hearing that Dr. Grothe was going with the Vali to Pushti Kuh I telegraphed to the British Minister at Tehran asking whether he would like me to attempt to discourage the proposal, and if he thought it would be a good thing to obtain the support of the Russian Consul-General. The Minister replied that it was better to be neutral, but that I should inform the Consul-General of what I heard. M. Maschkoff professed to know little about Grothe, but he said that it would be easy to stop his going with the Vali. I said that I did not see how this could be done, and he replied that it could be done by giving a hint to Ghulan Raza Khan (the Vali). I said that it was not worth while to do that, and M. Maschkoff then said that he agreed with me, and that the Germans would get what information they wanted. At present M. Maschkoff is not on very good terms with the German Consul, and I cannot avoid the impression that he suggested making difficulties to see if I would agree, and that he was not really inclined to do anything contrary to German interests. This impression is caused more by M. Maschkoff's manner than by any words that he used. Has he received instructions not to pull against the Germans? There are various stories to account for the presence at Bagdad of the Vali of Pushti Kuh. One story is that one of the Shah's brothers is trying to persuade him to declare against the present Shah, and that he has left his country to avoid taking any decided line of action. The more plausible story that the Vali has been having differences of opinion with his son and his brother and that they all three came here on the understanding that they should take a mutual oath in the sacred shrine at Kerbela.

The Vali has given me the name of a British subject as the person through whom I can best communicate with him, and I have also found a Bagdad Jew who has agents in Pushti Kuh.

6. *Kyazim Pasha.*—By the last mail I received an envelope from Paris addressed to the British Consul-General, and when I opened it I found two closed letters, one addressed to Kyazim Pasha and the other to Ismail Bey. I do not know who Ismail Bey is, but Kyazim Pasha is a brother-in-law of the Sultan, who has been in disgrace for some years. I believe that one of his alleged crimes was that he was too friendly with the English, and that he wanted to sell to them some of his landed property. I have never met Kyazim Pasha, and my native agent informs me that he has declined to receive him on a former occasion. I do not quite know what to do with the letters. I think I shall keep them on the chance of getting a convenient opportunity of delivering them, with a warning that I cannot allow myself to be used as a post office for clandestine correspondence. It is, of course, possible that the letters are not genuine, and that a trap is being made for me.

7. *Kazi of Bagdad.*—In my Confidential Memorandum No. 1 I gave an account of a rather interesting message sent to me by the Kazi of Bagdad. When the late Vali left Bagdad about February last the Kazi became acting Vali and I seized the oppor-

tunity to call on him. He did not return my call for some time, so I told my native agent to ask him the reason. He replied that he was afraid to be seen at the British Residency, and I said that I did not wish to press the point.

A few days ago I came face to face with him on M. Maschkoff's lawn, and the next day he sent a message to say that he would like to call on me. The interview has not yet taken place, and I shall be much interested to hear how he accounts for this sudden change of attitude.

8. *Russian Stationnaire.*—The Russian Consul-General informed Mr. Gaskin a few days ago that the Russian Government were sending a steamer to Bushire to remain at the disposal of the Russian Representative there. M. Maschkoff said that he had last heard of the steamer at Perim.

9. *German Bank.*—There seems little doubt that there will be a German Bank in Bagdad before long. Dr. Gauthmann (?) of the Deutsche Orient Bank is expected here in the course of the next three or four weeks.

10. *Disturbances on the Tigris.*—Bagdad is entirely cut off from telegraphic communication and there are the most disquieting rumours about. On the 11th May the Vali of Bagdad sent to ask me if I had heard anything of an attack on one of Lynch's steamers. To-day (the 12th) I have heard one story that the British Consulate at Bussorah has been attacked, and another that the tribes in the Lower Tigris are in a very disturbed state. It is impossible to guess what foundation there is for these stories.

J. RAMSAY.

Bagdad, May 12, 1907.

[20766] No. 81.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 24.)

(No. 355. Confidential.)

Sir, *Therapia, June* 13, 1907.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 106 of the 26th March and to my despatch No. 314 of the 28th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum inclosing copies of despatches and an extract from a private letter from Mr. Safrastian, the dragoman in charge of His Majesty's Vice-Consulate at Bitlis, relative to the condition of the Christians in the Moush and Bitlis districts.

The outrage committed by the Tchaoush Reshid at the village of Vartenis, which appears to be substantiated, is a particularly cruel one and I hope to get the culprit severely punished.

I am somewhat reluctant to implicitly accept all the statements made by the Armenian gentleman who is in charge of His Majesty's Vice-Consulate at Bitlis, but I note that he says that the action of the authorities has of late been more moderate, which probably indicates that the instructions sent by the Grand Vizier have had a good effect.

Captain Dickson, His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, is shortly proceeding on a tour in the southern portion of his vilayet, and I have instructed him to stay as long as possible at Bitlis with a view to inquiring into the situation. I greatly regret that it has not been possible to station a regular Consular officer at Bitlis during the summer, but I think the presence of Captain Dickson, although Bitlis is not properly within his district, will have good results and enable the Embassy to judge accurately of the real condition of affairs. In the meantime, I am furnishing the Grand Vizier with a précis of the reports from Van and Bitlis, and I am confident that he will make a strict inquiry into the facts and will cause justice to be done to the utmost of his power.

At the request of the Russian Ambassador, I have requested Captain Dickson to confer with the Russian Consul at Bitlis with a view to representations to the Vali more or less of a joint character.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 81.

Consul Shipley to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 29. Confidential.)

Sir, *Erzeroum, May* 30, 1907.

WITH reference to your Excellency's despatch of the 5th April last inclosing the copy of a telegram addressed by the "Droshak" newspaper in London to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, I have now the honour to transmit to your Excellency herewith the copies of two despatches which I have received from Mr. Safrastian, dragoman in charge of His Majesty's Vice-Consulate at Bitlis, furnishing a report which I had requested from him on the condition of the Christians in the Moush and Bitlis districts.

Mr. Safrastian in his despatch (Inclosure No. 2) after referring to the high-handed proceedings adopted with regard to the Armenian villagers by the Commission appointed to effect the settlement of the Mussulman immigrants into those parts, gives a further list of the shocking outrages which it is alleged have been committed by the tax-gatherers on helpless Armenian women in the absence of the men folk of the latter. Mr. Safrastian, as your Excellency will notice, addressed two specific cases and, whether the reports of these outrages be in all instances authentic or not, it is impossible to ignore the fact on which I have so frequently had occasion to insist that at no time does any serious effort appear to have been made by the authorities to inquire into the complaints brought by Armenians or to bring the offenders to justice if found guilty. It is, however, to be noted that the agitation among the Armenian villagers for emigration to Russia would appear to have had the effect of procuring for the latter a respite of a certain kind if, as Mr. Safrastian thinks, it is to this cause that the temporary suspension of the collection of all taxes, excepting that on sheep, together with the introduction of milder methods, is to be attributed.

Mr. Safrastian's second despatch (Inclosure No. 3) deals with the request which, as reported to your Excellency in my despatch No. 21 of the 1st instant, I had addressed to him for information respecting the existence or otherwise of an anti-Governmental agitation among the Kurdish and Turkish population of his district, as also whether there was any foundation for the fears which it was alleged were being entertained of a second massacre. As your Excellency will notice, Mr. Safrastian considers that, notwithstanding a momentary panic among the Christians, referred to in my telegram to your Excellency of the 24th instant, there are no real grounds for the latter of the two rumours above referred to; while as regards the first, although the events at Erzeroum of the past year would appear to have had a certain influence on the Turkish Notables of Bitlis, the strength and organization of the latter are, he thinks, not sufficient to justify the fear of any serious anti-Governmental agitation on their part.

I subjoin herewith, for your Excellency's further information, the copies of an extract from a private letter, dated the 11th instant, which I have received from Mr. Safrastian giving full details respecting the movement among the Armenians of the Bitlis vilayet for emigration to Russia, the substance of which I have already communicated to your Excellency in my telegram of the 24th instant above referred to.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 81.

Mr. Safrastian to Consul Shipley.

Sir, *Bitlis, May* 11, 1907.

WITH reference to your despatch of the 19th ultimo, I have the honour to report that the condition of affairs in the Moush and Bitlis districts is far from being satisfactory, even compared with that of two or three years ago.

After the settlement of the Mussulman immigrants in Boulanik last autumn, reported by Mr. Geary on the 2nd October last, a Government Commission was sent from Moush to the plain in December, to discover suitable habitations for further contingents of Moslem immigrants which were to arrive soon. From the complaints made by the Armenians of villages of Ardonk, Vartenis, Dermerd, Arnis, Oushdam,

&c., to the Vali here, it was understood that the Commission presided over by the ill-famed Khalil Effendi of Moush, to be able to procure habitations for the immigrants, was forcing the Armenians out of their homes, grouping together two or three families of them in a single house. Fields and pastures, belonging to Armenians by title deeds, were line out for the immigrants, which, fortunately have not arrived hitherto, and there are no news of their immediate arrival.

Some villages in the plain, Koms, Arnis, Oushdam, &c., are almost emptied of their Armenian inhabitants in the course of last year, the Armenians having fled to Diarbekir, Aleppo, and Khinis (in some cases). From other villages of the plain, Ziardet, Sheikhlan, Dom, Kizil-Aghatch, Avazaghur, Meghdi, Sordar, Kheybian, &c., five or ten families from each have escaped to the above-mentioned places.

The reasons of these flights are said to be: firstly, their utmost misery, and the impossibility of livelihood in their present conditions; secondly, their cruel treatment at the hands of tax-gatherers, specially when, owing to their financial incapacity, they cannot pay the taxes.

As a result of the irresponsible conduct of tax-gatherers, the collection of taxes is a permanent scourge for the Armenian population of this vilayet, allege the villagers. All the reports, stories, and the complaints of Armenians, from one end of the Moush plain to the other, converge on the same point, to the effect that the tax-gatherers treat the Armenians like beasts, exact from them food for themselves and for their animals, when they know even that the villagers do not possess what they require, they beat them to the point of fainting, insult them in every way. In the absence of men (as the men run away hearing the coming of tax-gatherers) they treat the women still more shamefully; they collect them (especially the young ones) in stables, tie them to each other by the hair, put cats into their drawers, spit into their mouths, undress them, and pour out cold water over them.

I shall adduce the cases of two women in Vartenis in October last, reported by the priests of the village and confirmed from other sources. Bayaz, the wife of Avediss, and Kohar, the wife of Melik, both of them young and pregnant, were hung down by the feet, as a joke, by a certain Reshid Tehaoush. A few hours later both women had miscarried their children very painfully.

As a typical case it is to be mentioned that the tax-gatherers had forcibly sold in January last the grains of some Armenian families in Khaskegh (three hours from Moush). For the 4,000 piastres acquired in this way the tax-gatherers had given receipts only for 2,000 piastres. Some weeks later other tax-gatherers had arrived in the village, demanding the remaining 2,000 piastres, once paid already. The victims came here and protested to Ferid Pasha, who referred the matter to the Government of Moush, from which they had been expelled already.

It is, however, to be stated that no collection of taxes is carried on since February last, all over the vilayet, except the sheep-tax, which was collected quite mildly in March. This relapse in the collection of taxes is attributed to the widespread tendency and the present movement of emigration, which is the burning question of the day for this vilayet.

With the people of Boulanik and Akhlat, hundreds of villagers of the Moush plain are coming every day to Bitlis to demand permission for emigration to Russia. They have not done any ploughing or sowing, being firm in their plan of emigation. They allege they are so heavily charged with debts to Kurds, that even with the most successful harvest this summer they will be left without any provision for next winter. In these circumstances, they say, the only alternative for them is the emigration to Russia.

I have, &c.
(Signed) ARSHAG S. SAFRASTIAN,
Dragoman.

Inclosure 3 in No. 81.

Mr. Safrastian to Consul Shipley.

Sir, *Bitlis, May* 11, 1907.

WITH reference to your despatch of the 10th April last, I have the honour to report that there seems to be no foundation of the allegation as to the existence of an agitation among Turks and Kurds of this vilayet directed against the Government.

It is true that the events at Erzeroum in October last, the Imperial pardon of the "personal" and "domestic animals" taxes, which here at least were considered to be

the outcome of the former, and the provocatory letters from the rebellion leaders of Erzeroum to the Turkish Notables of Bitlis, have perceptibly roused lately the popular consciousness as to their collective power for political activity; but it is not an organized and strong force to justify the fears of an agitation.

The case of the 8th instant may be considered an illustration of my above-mentioned assertion. After days of deliberation and hesitation, all the Turks and Kurds of Bitlis had decided on Wednesday last to close the bazaar and the shops (persuading some of the Armenians to follow them) and make a demonstration before the house of the Vali for the grievances caused by the prohibition of the circulation of worn coins. On the morning of the 8th all shops were closed, and for some hours serious fears of a rebellion were expressed; but Ferid Pasha was wise enough to persuade some Chiefs and push them to open their shops, which was followed at once by all others.

Having in view the intellectual level of the population here as a whole, in my humble opinion there is slight chance of success of an agitation as long as the Government does not touch the personal interests of the Moslem people.

As regards the allegation of another Armenian massacre, there does not seem to be any foundation for such an assertion. Some suspicion was felt on the 3rd instant, and all Armenians of Bitlis fled from the market, alleging that the massacre was to begin in the afternoon. Some Turks were reported as having informed their Armenian friends of the possibility of a massacre. Nothing happened, however, and the next day every Armenian was sure in the market. The only solution given to this riddle was that—for which I have no proof whatever—the Vali, forseeing the possibility of an agreement between the Moslems and the Armenians of Bitlis for a common demonstration on account of the worn coins, wanted to sow discord and enmity between the two peoples.

There seems to be otherwise no ground for fears of another massacre of Armenians in this vilayet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) ARSHAG S. SAFRASTIAN,
Dragoman.

Inclosure 4 in No. 81.

Mr. Safrastian to Consul Shipley.

(Private.)
(Extract.) *Bitlis, May* 11, 1907.

ACCORDING to official news, 120,000 Armenians have applied to the Government so far (through their representatives), from Boulanik, Akhlat, and Melazgherd, demanding passports for Russia. They have not sown any field of land this spring, and seem entirely determined to emigrate without any secret designs. Even in spite of the fact that the Government, foreseeing the possibility of a famine next winter, sent out "suwari" (mounted gendarmes) to the above-mentioned kazas for the purpose of compelling the Armenian peasants to plough and sow the lands. Even then the efforts of the gendarmes—occasionally the tortures—have proved futile hitherto, which, I think, shows that they are quite firm in their decision.

In the course of the week the representatives of more than twenty villages of the Moush plain came here, giving in Petitions. It is said that all the Armenian villages of the plain will send their Petitions; they also do not do any ploughing or sowing. There is a general anxiety among the people here of an almost certain famine next winter if the Armenians will persist stubbornly in their decision, and I take the liberty of calling your attention on this most important question.

The Vali asked to his house yesterday some Armenian Notables, and requested them to find out means and to persuade the Armenians to renounce the foolish idea of emigration. He urged the Notables to report to the Armenian Patriarch at Constantinople that the Armenians want to emigrate in consequence of their ill-treatment at the hands of the Kurds and their extreme distress. He had presented to them a telegram addressed to the Imperial Palace, compelling them to sign it, saying that the Russian Consul at Bitlis and his dragoman are inciting the ignorant villagers to emigration and alluring them into the supposed Eldorado of the Caucasus with false promises, viz., grant of lands in Russia, the expenses of the journey, &c. I think, personally, that the Vali is right in his complaint against M. Chirkow.

Three days ago, on Friday, the Armenians here were frightened by a rumour that the massacre would begin at the noontime of the same day. All Armenians closed

their shops at once and took refuge in their houses. There was really nothing in it, the explanation being that the Vali wanted to play a foul game of sowing enmity between the Turks and Armenians at Bitlis, which, he thinks are on the eve of an agreement for a common demonstration against the Government for the question of worn coins.

From trustworthy sources it was stated that a demonstration was to be made had the earthquake not happened in these days. On the 8th May, Wednesday last, all Kurdish and Turkish shopkeepers and artisans had agreed not to open the shops and make a demonstration before the "baraque" of the Vali. For a few hours suspicions and fears were spread everywhere, but Ferid Pasha was wise enough to win some influential Chiefs and cause them to open the shops, which was soon followed by everybody. Two hours later the market was as lively as usual. At present nothing is to be feared.

[20777] No. 82.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 24.)

(No. 367.)

Sir, *Therapia, June 19, 1907.*

WITH reference to your despatch No. 218 of the 5th instant, on the subject of the proposed establishment of a German bank at Bagdad, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch which Major Ramsay, Acting British Consul-General in that city, has addressed to the Board of Trade, urging that a British bank should be established there.

I believe that the Ottoman Bank would welcome the establishment of such a bank, as it would divide the responsibility of advances, and, in their opinion, be generally beneficial to both institutions as well as to the development of trade.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 82.

Acting Consul-General Ramsay to Board of Trade.

(Confidential.)

Sir, *Bagdad, May 20, 1907.*

I HAVE the honour to invite the attention of the Board of Trade to the desirability of taking immediate steps to induce British bankers to examine the possibility of opening a branch at Bagdad. I regret that I am not in a position to give such detailed information on the prospects of success as would be of use to an expert. The trade of Bagdad is not only large, but it is growing, and with the increased attention that is being directed to this part of the world, the trade must grow very quickly in the future. In addition to the ordinary statistics which are already available to any inquirer in London, I can only give the following information:—

(1.) The Deutsche Orient Bank has every intention of opening a branch here before long, and a representative of the bank, who is or was at Tehran (M. Gutmann) is expected here in a few weeks. This is a matter of common knowledge. I also hear that a powerful French bank is making inquiries about the prospects of business here.

(2.) The credit conveniences available at Bagdad are generally admitted to fall short of the demand. The result is that the ordinary rate for discounting bills varies from about 10 to 13 per cent. These bills are locally known as "Compialas," they usually pass through the hands of a "Sarraf" (half broker, half banker), and are looked upon as good security.

(3.) The amount of these "Compialas" is estimated at about 250,000*l.* Of these, about 100,000*l.* are said to be in the hands of the Ottoman Bank, while the rest are in the hands of Jews and others.

(4.) Mr. Lloyd (Board of Trade Commercial Mission) has interviewed some of the "Sarrafs," and he understands that they would welcome, and not oppose, the opening of a new bank. A number of merchants have also expressed their desire for better banking facilities.

(5.) I inclose a list of those persons who are in England, and who are likely to have at their disposal knowledge of Bagdad business, which might serve as a basis for further inquiry by an expert.

2. I have not been able to find out the reasons that led the Imperial Bank of Persia to withdraw from Bagdad in favour of the Imperial Ottoman Bank.

3. Though I can at present do no more than suggest inquiry by an expert, I should be glad to do my best to answer any direct questions, the answers to which would be useful to an expert. The one thing of which I am certain is that if an English bank is to make a fair start it should lose no time in opening business here, otherwise it will find competitors in possession. At present the Imperial Ottoman Bank is alone, and it is therefore master of the financial situation.

It is perhaps not understood in England that goods ordered by letter from Bagdad are seldom received in less than four months, while they often take much longer to reach Bagdad. In these circumstances, there is ample scope for credit operations.

4. On showing the draft of this letter to Mr. Lloyd, he informs me that Mr. Walpole Greenwell, of the well-known firm of the same name in the city, went into the question of the possibility of opening a British bank in Bagdad; he might prove a source of useful information to the Board of Trade.

I have, &c.

(Signed) J. RAMSAY, *Major,*
Political Resident in Turkish Arabia and His Britannic Majesty's Consul-General, Bagdad.